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[PRICE ONE PENNY



[A SOUND THRESHING.]

## LOVE'S DREAM AND REALITY; OR, THE HOUSE OF SECRETS.

### CHAPTER I.

There's nothing half so sweet in life  
As love's young dream.

Moore.

WESTWARD of Charlottesville, in Virginia, a beautiful variety of mountain scenery opens on the traveller as he ascends towards the summit of the Blue Ridge. Beyond Lexington no artist, in the wildest luxuriance of his fancy, could picture such grandeur and beauty as meet the eye on every side. Mountains, richly wooded, stretch far away, their outlines softened by distance till blended with the blue of the horizon. Cultivated fields luxuriant with grain or pasturage, and homesteads of substantial comfort, cover the plain.

In summer wild flowers profusely decorate the hill-slopes; the kalmia fills the woods with its delicate white and pink blossoms, and the rhododendron, Virginia primrose, wild rose, and a variety of other blooms, enamel the rich foliage like a garden. There are ledges with an abrupt ascent on one side and a precipice on the other, and ravines dark with shade sending up a murmur from foaming streams in their depths. Each height gives views of mountains piled on mountains, lost in blue ether as they recede.

In this picturesque region is many an extensive plateau, watered by the mountain streams, affording space for the large wheat and corn plantations of the wealthy Virginian gentlemen, who in former years lived in baronial state among their dependents. Their proud old families were the descendants of the Cavaliers, and brought from England their ancient customs. Their vast estates descended, in many cases, to the eldest son, and were transmitted almost undivided from generation to generation. The labourers and tenants were mostly the property of the master, and owed him the allegiance of feudal subjects.

One of these ancient estates, occupying land along the banks of the New River, one of the branches of

the Great Kanawha, had belonged for many scores of years to the same family; but its extent had been sadly diminished by division among heirs, some of whom had parted with their patrimony. About two thousand acres remained, kept under excellent cultivation by the last proprietor, who ruled the population around him like a sovereign rather than an English lord of the soil.

Gilbert Halstead inherited, with the lands, the spirit of his high-toned ancestry. He was a kind and indulgent master, a liberal householder, and yet a thrifty proprietor. He had cleared off one or two mortgages from the land since he came into possession, yet he exercised the frank hospitality for which the "Old Dominion" had long been celebrated. His wife had died in giving birth to his only child, a daughter, whom he had sent to be educated at Richmond, and whom he had brought to be the light of his home only a few months before the opening of this story.

The Halstead mansion was situated on a commanding eminence, with a grassy lawn sloping down to the road, from which it was separated by a tall iron fence, on a stone wall, bordered by shady trees. The house was of brick, with massive frame work, and was said to have been rebuilt about 1730. The substantial colonnade in front gave a view of the distant river; the rear looked on a pleasant green sward, shaded by elms, acacias and tulip trees of great size. The outbuildings were unusually high and substantially built; the nearest was overgrown with luxuriant ivy. Even the tenements of the domestics were framed like a stronghold. The rich fields of clover and parklike groves at greater distance, bespoke the taste and culture of a man of wealth.

It was towards the close of a long autumnal afternoon, when a young girl sauntered from the rear of the house towards an arbour on the lawn, covered with the clustering vines of the Cherokee rose. She wore a light straw hat trimmed with a delicate wreath of green leaves, and was swinging a green silk parasol, while a small basket hung on her arm. Her dress was white muslin, sprinkled with buff, and her

shoulders were partially covered with a white lace scarf.

She did not stay long in the arbour. Her errand may have been to awaken a large shaggy dog that lay reposing in the shade; for when she came out the dog was gambolling by her side.

The girl threw a quick, stealthy glance at the nearest upper windows of the mansion, then patting her canine attendant, drew her veil closely over her face, and took her way partly round the house through an embowered avenue leading to a side entrance of the grounds.

As she passed into the avenue she heard a voice calling, and stopped for a moment.

"Myra! Myra!" called the voice.

The young girl tossed her head with a gesture of haughty vexation. As the call was repeated she looked back.

A female figure stood upon the trellised balcony on which the second floor window opened.

"Why do you go out so soon, Myra?" she asked, in a clear, melodious voice. "You have not finished your music lesson."

"I have!" pertly responded the girl, throwing back her veil.

The face thus disclosed showed extreme youth, and was certainly a very pretty one. With the bloom of sixteen, she had large violet blue eyes, rippling light brown hair, that framed the fair cheeks most becomingly, and roseate lips, full and pouting, not the less beautiful now for the rebellious scorn that curved them. The little hand that swept back the gauzy veil was white and delicate as a snowflake, and guiltless of a glove.

"How provoking!" she exclaimed as the form retired from the window. "I wish papa had left Miss Kent to drill her pupils in Richmond! I hate her, that I do! I will not be controlled by her out of school hours!" and having given vent to these amiable sentiments the young lady turned to pursue her way, seeking the densest part of the road among the trees, and followed by her faithful dog.

She went on rapidly; but she soon became

sensible that some one was following her. Steps as rapid as her own came after her, and presently she was brought to a stand by a light but determined touch on her arm. Then she turned to confront her foe.

She saw a young woman, who might have been judged to be four or five and twenty, of a tall and finely developed figure, remarkable for the litheness of its movements. She wore a dress of blue and white muslin, a scarf of blue barege and a white sun-bonnet without a veil. These had evidently been thrown on in haste, for her braided hair, black as jet, was not in the perfect glossy order habitual to it, and she was panting with the speed of her pursuit. Her dusky eyes flashed, and her cheek was slightly touched with crimson.

"It is against rules, Miss Halstead," she said, quietly, but in a decided tone, "for you to walk out till the lesson and practising are finished. Please to come back."

"I have done practising. I will not return," replied the girl, defiantly. "I can do more when I have had my walk."

"No, that will not do. You must complete your task now."

"And what have you been doing?" cried the girl, saucily, glancing at a book her governess held in her hand. "Reading a French novel!"

"No matter. I am ready to hear you play."

"I do not choose to play any more to-day."

"I require you to finish the lesson. After that you may walk out, and I will accompany you."

"I do not want your company, Miss Kent, and I am not subject to your will. When I am tired of a lesson I can break it off. You domineer over me. I will appeal to papa."

"Your papa, Myra, engaged me to attend to your studies, and to insist on your performance of your duties. I shall endeavour to do so. You can appeal to him, if you like, for future freedom. Now, I beg that you will come with me and finish what we were doing."

Miss Kent took the girl's arm to lead her back; but the refractory pupil flung off her gentle grasp.

"Once for all, I will not return with you, Miss Kent," she cried, and turning quickly she sped like a fawn down the path among the bushes, followed by the dog, that plunged after her with a joyous bark. Both ran on till they reached the gate, which Myra flung open, and taking out the key looked it on the outer side. "Now we will see how my lady will manage to get out," she exclaimed, with a light laugh, and calling the dog she hurried on across the road to a wood a few rods distant.

Some half an hour afterward the wilful girl was at the other side of a dense thicket, picking her way down broken rocks to a narrow and rapid stream, that issued a mile above from a cleft in the mountain side. A wealth of bright green foliage filled this little ravine, and the wild grape vine grew in such luxuriance, wreathing its tendrils into graceful and inviting arbours, as to exclude the sunlight. Farther on the stream grew suddenly broader, and calm as a pure lake. It was there studded with tiny islets, each a spot of turf as vivid as an emerald.

"I am in time," murmured the young girl as she loosened from a sapling a rope that held fast a pretty painted boat, in which she was accustomed to take stolen excursions. "Get in, Bruno; I want to be out of sight before Miss Kent can spy me out."

The little barque was green like the bushes where it lay hid, and was scarcely seen even when pushed out into the stream. Myra stepped in over the stones, seated herself, and took up an oar to push the light craft into the current. Bruno was already crouched in the bottom of the boat.

Her name, pronounced in stern tones, caused the startled girl to turn quickly, and she saw the dreaded governess standing on the bank, and presently descending to the water. The impetuous hoyden knew there was but one way of escaping her persevering doctress. She cried to the dog:

"Seize her, Bruno! seize her!"

Then she gave the boat a vigorous push, while the dog, obedient to her command, sprang over the wet stones, rushed up the ragged ascent and attacked Miss Kent with such violence as to knock her down, tearing and rents in her muslin dress and pulling her scarf from her shoulders.

The governess fell with a cry of terror, and the next instant, at a call from his youthful mistress, the dog bounded away, plunged into the water and swam to the barque, into which he leaped, shaking the water from his shaggy coat and looking up pleasantly into Myra's face.

"I hope she is not hurt!" muttered the girl, hesitating an instant with the oar poised in her hand. "I only meant to frighten her. No, she is up again. Aha, Miss Watcher! you must not play the gaoler on me!"

While speaking she had shot the little boat into

the stiller water, and taking both oars she piled them with a skill that speedily, with the aid of the current, carried her out of sight. Then she began to trill a song in an undertone, looking wistfully at every clump of bushes as she passed, as if in expectation of some one.

She had gone fully half a mile before a low whistle answered her clear, sweet trilling, and brought her suddenly to a stand. The stream was narrower and bordered by a close growth of aquatic plants, starred by beautiful water-lilies.

The whistle was repeated, and presently the maiden pushed her boat through the rushes and lilies to where two prostrate logs made a rude landing-place.

A young man parted the thick foliage, and stepped out to meet her.

So dark was the nook that the girl seemed not sure of his identity.

"Is it you, Fred?" she asked, doubtfully.

"Surely it is I, my beauty!" cried the young man.

"I knew you would come, for you promised me, and to me you have never broken your word. Give me your other hand! Now, step here!"

He helped her on shore, and drew up the boat into the rushes.

"Oh! but, Fred, I have had such a time! That tyrant of a governess fairly chased me down to the water. I had to set the dog on her to get away! Oh, I am trembling yet! No—you need not clasp me so tight! I must breathe, you know! But I cannot stay long. That Miss Kent may go and tell papa I am out in the boat!"

"Come into the wood, darling! There is such a lovely grape-arbour not far off. They cannot find you there!"

"But how dark it is! Can it be so late?"

"No—no—it is not four yet! Lean on me, love! I could carry you easily!"

They reached the clustering arbour, and sat down on moss-covered pieces of rock under the trailing vines.

Fred encircled the girl's slender waist with his arm, and tenderly removed her hat to let the cool air play on her flushed cheeks.

She leaned her head till it drooped on his shoulder, while, as he bent over her, his eyes, full of love, could look into hers. He was a very young and handsome man, and the tableau of love-making was a decidedly pretty one.

They gave no heed to anything but each other—that enamoured young pair, but at long, murmuring such talk as lovers indulge in, Myra starting up now and then to listen if any hostile step drew near, and her companion soothing her fears.

The dog went sniffing into the wood and along the ravine, in search of objects of interest for himself.

#### CHAPTER II.

For aught that ever I could read,  
Could ever hear by tale or history,  
The course of true love never did run smooth.

Shakespeare.

SOME time elapsed before the discomfited governess reached the house. She was in sad condition—her dress torn and covered with mud, her scarf and book missing, her bonnet crushed, her cheeks flushed and wet with tears.

She walked slowly and with difficulty, for she had twisted one of her ankles in the fall on the slippery rocks. She took the shaded avenue on her way home, but the pain she suffered compelled her to rest at intervals; and at last, wearied out, she flung herself on one of the rustic seats, drooping her head on her hands, and gave way to her grief and humiliation.

"Is it a home for me where I must bear such things?" she murmured, wiping away the tears that would start afresh. "But what can I do?"

"Miss Kent!" she heard a voice exclaim, in evident surprise.

She started up alarmed.

Gilbert Halstead stood looking at her. He was a tall man of powerful frame, and his features were cast in the same strong, grand mould. His hair was grizzled, but abundant, and clustered in heavy curls over a broad, pale forehead. His complexion was bronzed, and lighted by a pair of keen gray eyes, under straight, massive eyebrows. His mouth was stern and haughty in its curve, but softened into rare beauty when he smiled. The nobility of soul that had been the pride and the stamp of his race looked out from his face, inspiring awe and trust at the same time.

As he met the startled gaze of the governess he apologized with true manly courtesy for having surprised her.

"But I see you are suffering," he said. "What has happened?"

"I have hurt my ankle; I have had a fall," replied the lady, averting her face.

"It must have been a severe one," said the gentle-

man, with sympathy. "Be seated, I beg. I will call the servants to assist you."

"No, no! I am quite able to walk—that is, I shall be when I am rested," replied the girl, blushing, and trying to adjust her bonnet. "I am not so much dilapidated as my dress, I assure you," she continued, trying to smile.

"How did it happen?"

"I—I slipped on the rocks by the stream in the valley yonder."

"Ah, it is a dangerous place. You might have slid into the water. Were you alone? Where is Myra?"

"I do not know."

"Not know! Then she must be in the house. She shall come to you."

"She is not in the house, Mr. Halstead."

"Surely she has not gone out alone, so late in the afternoon! The sun has set already. You did not let her disobey—"

He checked himself, as if his next words would have been a rebuke to his daughter's careless governess; and he did not wish to speak them while she was in that suffering state.

"I could not help it, indeed," almost sobbed his companion.

"This must be seen to," muttered the father.

"Take my arm, Miss Kent; I will assist you to the house, and then look after the truant myself."

He gave the governess his arm, holding her hand till she had firmly placed it, giving her his cane to support her steps on the other side, and speaking kindly and encouragingly. Thus they reached the front entrance, where he offered to lift her up the marble steps.

"No, thank you; I am better already," she answered, as she walked up more firmly than before.

Several servants came around the house, for they saw something was the matter by the dumping of the governess.

"Call Bruno here," ordered the master.

"Bruno has gone with Miss Myra," shouted two of the servants in a breath.

"Which way did they go?"

"Down yonder," pointing towards the wooded ravine. "Let me run for her!"

"No, send me," cried another. "I saw her and Bruno in the boat."

"The boat! What boat?" demanded the gentleman.

"The little green boat that Miss Myra goes rowing in. It's her own boat."

"Good heavens, Miss Kent! Is my daughter in the habit of going on the water alone?" exclaimed Halstead, looking severely at the governess.

"Not to my knowledge! never—that I know of—till to-day," faltered she.

"And how came she to go to-day?"

"I do not know. I followed her to the ravine. I saw her in a boat, and it was in trying to bring her back that I—I—fell!"

She was white to the lips as she answered.

"Excuse me, you are suffering," Halstead said.

"Call the housekeeper, some of you, to attend to Miss Kent. I will go myself to find my daughter. She may meet with accident alone on that rapid stream, in a frail boat."

A lad, about sixteen, had joined the group.

"No danger, sir," he cried. "Miss Myra left the boat hours ago. I saw her talking to a gentleman in the grape arbour."

"Talking to a gentleman? What do you mean?"

"The young gentleman who takes walks with her in the moonlight."

A fearful change passed over Halstead's face, but he uttered not a word. Taking his cane, which Miss Kent had laid on a chair upon the piazza, he strode off rapidly in the direction the lad had indicated, not once looking back. The governess, attended by the housekeeper, went to her room.

Her anxiety about her charge was now deeper than her resentment at the treatment she had undergone at her hands.

Evidently the little vixen had had an object in defying her authority, in running away, and in frightening her by ordering the dog's attack, and she remembered with horror that more than once she had missed Myra, and had found her in her room flushed and excited, "after a short walk about the grounds in the moonlight." She had a secret lover! and her teacher, to whom the guardianship of the wild and wilful girl had been committed, had permitted herself to be so deceived!

Too much agitated to stay in her room, Miss Kent changed her dress, bathed her face, and descended to the library. There she waited the return of Mr. Halstead.

The twilight deepened into night; the servants lighted the lower rooms; yet still they had not returned.

Miss Kent refused the tea brought her by the butler.



and, reclining on the sofa, awaited the coming of her pupil in deep solitude.

Mr. Halstead crossed rapidly towards the wood, not heeding that he was followed by the lad. His head was in a whirl; he was more moved than he had been for years before. It was dark in the thicket he entered, and the dense undergrowth made walking difficult.

Suddenly he heard a short, quick bark, and Bruno sprang to welcome him; then, as divining his object, the dog ran on before him, looking back to see if he was followed.

The dog led the way straight to the arbour, where the young lovers had just exchanged a parting embrace.

Myra was frightened when she saw how late it was, and still more so when the pale moonlight, shimmering down through a rift in the foliage, revealed her father!

He came to meet them, took his daughter by the arm, and angrily flung her on one side, bidding her go home directly.

"For you, sir," he said to the young man, "you deserve, for your base conduct, not the punishment we reserve for gentlemen, but scoundrels."

He raised his cane as he spoke, and a rain of blows descended on the young man's shoulders.

Fred found it in vain to struggle with a foe so vastly his superior in strength. There was no resource but ignominious retreat, and to this he betook himself, his threats of vengeance mingled with furious execrations.

Myra shrieked again and again when she saw the treatment her lover was receiving, and rushed forward to clutch her father's arm. As the youth disappeared in the wood, she sank fainting upon the ground.

Mr. Halstead lifted her in his arms, and was preparing to retrace his steps through the bushes, when Silas, the lad who had followed him, came forward to say he had found the boat, and his master had better put his young mistress into it.

This was done, and Silas pulled the light craft up the stream to the first landing, his master walking along the bank.

The young girl had recovered her consciousness when her father lifted her out, and could walk, leaning on his arm.

He supported her tenderly, and the few words he uttered were in tones of kindness. He bade Silas take the boat away, and took the path homeward.

"Stay, there are these things!" called out the lad, holding out the book and scarf that lay on the rocks.

"Are they yours, Myra?" asked her father.

"No, papa; they belong to Miss Kent," replied the girl.

Mr. Halstead took them.

It was so late that Miss Kent began to be seriously alarmed, when to her great relief she heard the sound of steps on the gravelled walk. She sprang up to rush to the door, but a choking feeling of mortification drove her back, and she was standing by the mantelpiece, pale, but firm in self-possession, when the father and daughter entered the library.

Myra sank upon a chair, and buried her face in her hands.

Mr. Halstead crossed the room, and offered Miss Kent her book and scarf.

"These are yours, Miss Kent, I believe," he said, very coldly.

She took them in silence; she ventured but one glance at his face; she had never before seen him so pale and stern. Her heart died within her.

"To-morrow morning," he said, in the same rigid, displeased manner, "we will have an explanation in regard to this affair. For that purpose, I beg the favour of an interview as early as your convenience will allow."

The governess read her doom in his words, in his looks. With a bow, she turned in silence to leave the room.

Myra sprang to her feet with her wonted impetuosity, and caught her arm.

"No—stay—Clarice—Miss Kent!" she cried, in the midst of her convulsive sobbing. "Papa, you are severe, but you must not be unjust! Clarice has known nothing of what I have done! she did her best to keep me at home this afternoon; she pursued me to the landing, and even tried to force me to leave the boat. I was angry and determined to baffle her; I set Bruno upon her; he flew at her and tore her dress and knocked her down on the rocks. You see she was not to blame."

"You—set the dog on her!" repeated her father, in amazement.

"Yes, I did!" sobbed the girl; "I was so vexed at her for spying on me! but I see she was not a spy, for she did not even tell you how badly I treated her."

"It is well, my daughter, that you have done justice, tardy as it is, in this instance," said Mr. Halstead.

"I have been ill-used myself," faltered the young girl, bursting into a tempest of fresh tears: "but I do not want another to suffer unjustly."

Mr. Halstead turned to the governess.

"I deeply regret, Miss Kent," he said, "that you should have met with such an outrage, and I beg to apologize on behalf of Myra—and myself too, if I have spoken unkindly."

"You have not indeed, sir," returned Miss Kent. "You had reason to blame me, and I blame myself."

She restrained her tears with great difficulty, and again moved toward the door.

"You must forgive me, Clarice, before you go," pleaded her penitent pupil, seizing her hand and detaining her. "Papa has been very cruel to me; but you have always been kind. Say you forgive me."

Clarice stooped and kissed the girl warmly, then released her hand, and went on quickly. At the door she turned and said to Mr. Halstead:

"I will attend you, sir, in the library to-morrow morning."

In another instant she was gone.

The gentleman stood leaning his arm on the mantel, his head drooped upon it. When he looked up his features were contracted with pain and chagrin. He began to pace the room.

"Papa," said Myra, humbly, "may I go to my room?"

"Presently; I want to ask a few questions. How long has this been going on?"

"What?"

"This affair with that young man; and who is he?"

"His name," faltered the girl, "is Alfred Hobart. He is of a most respectable family in Bedford county. Oh, papa! you have no reason to be his enemy."

"Where did you make his acquaintance?"

"I met him at my first ball; at Mrs. Benton's; he is a distant connexion of hers."

"And he is an adventurer?"

"No, no!" exclaimed the girl.

"None other would have sought to ensnare the affections of a young girl in secret, would visit her by stealth and elude her guardian to obtain her fortune."

"Oh, papa!"

"You are a foolish child, Myra. Do you think if the fellow had had either good family or prospects he would not have come to me and asked my permission to address you? And you have been meeting him in secret?"

"I walked with him about the grounds—only half a dozen times, after dusk."

"I do not think he will venture here again."

Myra began to weep afresh.

"Go to your room, my child. You will profit by this lesson, I hope. We will have a farther talk to-morrow. Good night."

He held out his hand, which his daughter took coldly, but did not offer the usual kiss.

With the mien of a victim she ascended the stairs and went into her room. In a moment she came out and tapped shyly at the door of Miss Kent's chamber.

Bidden to enter she saw the governess seated by the window, and rushing to her she flung herself at her feet.

"Oh, Clarice, will you not pity me and help me?" she cried, weeping passionately.

Clarice raised her and made her sit down on the lounge, seating herself beside her.

"Myra, you must not be a child. See what trouble your reckless folly has brought on both of us," she said, sorrowfully.

"Upon me, certainly. To have my darling so cruelly beaten! Papa cannot love me if he so treats one whom I love! But I justified you, Clarice."

"No, Myra, you cannot win back for me your father's confidence. To-morrow he will dismiss me, and I will go back to Richmond."

"What do you mean?"

"I am very much to blame for not having prevented your imprudence; your father has judged me, therefore, unworthy of being entrusted with the care of his daughter. And I cannot deny that he is right."

"My father send you away!" exclaimed Myra.

"He shall do no such thing, though he has done enough already to make me almost hate him."

"Hush, child! your father is the noblest of men."

"How can you think so—so savage to me—so unjust to you?"

"No—he is not unjust. It is my inexcusable fault that you have committed such an error. Oh, my child, be always obedient to your father!"

"Clarice," murmured the girl, putting her white arms round her neck; "if you go away, I will go and live with you; and you shall let Fred come and see me, and we will be married from your house."

"Myra!"

"I am determined to marry Fred! if he wants my fortune, he shall have it, for the beating papa gave him to-day!" and she began to weep again.

"How foolishly you talk, Myra!"

"Well, I will say no more to-night. Only remember, if you leave this house, I leave it too! I will not submit to tyranny."

The silly child accused her father as she had accused her governess a few hours before. There was no use in reasoning with her; she yielded only to impulse.

Clarice rang for her maid to attend her in her chamber.

### CHAPTER III.

She was a phantom of delight  
When first she gleamed upon my sight,  
Wordsworth.

EARLY on the following morning, the post-bag was brought in by the usual messenger, Silas, and opened at the breakfast-table.

Myra had not appeared, but the governess was in her usual place.

Mr. Halstead distributed letters and papers, taking out a large square packet for himself, sealed with red wax. This he opened and read twice.

The girl who was maid to his daughter came into the room with a small tray, which she placed on a side table, and after whispering to Miss Kent, proceeded to put on it a cup of chocolate, toast, an egg and some biscuits.

"Why has not Myra come down?" asked Mr. Halstead, looking up.

"She is not well," replied the governess. "Sylvia is taking up her breakfast. Tell her I will come in to see her directly," she added, as the girl carried out the tray.

"Excuse me, Miss Kent," said the master. "May I speak with you first?"

"Certainly, sir," replied the lady, rising from the table. "I will wait for you in the library."

She passed out of the room as she spoke.

Mr. Halstead stopped to glance over three or four other letters; then, putting them all in his pocket, he took a turn or two through the room, standing by the window a few moments in a meditative attitude. Presently, recollecting that he was waited for in the library, he followed Miss Kent.

She was sitting by the table, quite collected and calm, though the crimson spot on either cheek showed that she had passed through a conflict of emotions. As soon as the door closed behind Mr. Halstead, she rose and spoke, apparently resolved to forestall him in the dismissal she was expecting to hear.

"Mr. Halstead," she said, "I cannot but be aware of your intention, you mean to terminate my engagement as your daughter's precontract. I have nothing to say why you should not, after what passed yesterday. I submit to your decision, and shall be ready to depart immediately."

Mr. Halstead turned upon her a face of incredulous astonishment.

"To depart—terminate your engagement? May I ask what you mean?"

"You were displeased—and I cannot say without cause—at what occurred last evening. I understood from what you said then that I had forfeited your confidence."

"Then you wholly misunderstood me."

It was her turn to look astonished.

"When you asked for an interview this morning, was it not your design to dismiss me?" asked Miss Kent.

He came close up to her, and took her hand.

"Clarice!"

Only that one word, yet what a revelation it was to the girl who had so bitterly felt that she was distrusted—was about to be discharged like an unworthy servant.

She had never before been spoken to by him in such a tone, and it thrilled her to the heart. She felt the blood surge in swift waves over her face. She glanced up at his; his eyes, full of unfathomable expression, were fixed upon her. Her eyes drooped before them.

"Clarice!" he repeated, in a low tone, full of feeling, "is it possible that you have known me so long, and have not known that I had more confidence in you than in any creature living?"

She looked up in genuine surprise.

"To lose you—to lose for my child the benefit of your society and of your lessons—for myself a friend so well qualified to counsel me—would be to me the greatest misfortune of my life."

The deep, almost tender earnestness, the warmth of his manner giving effect to his words—were a new revelation to her. Her eyes filled with tears; she withdrew her hand with an emotion she could not explain; trembling, she steadied herself on the arm of the chair. He resumed:

"Yes, my dear Miss Kent, you do injustice to me as well as to yourself to entertain such an absurd fancy as that I could wish to part with you. It would be a sad day to me, should you become dissatisfied and wish to leave us. I begged an interview, that I might ask a great favour."

Clarice regained her self-possession with an effort, and took her seat again.

"I have received news that compels me to leave home almost immediately, to be absent several weeks. I wish to entreat you to be more strict than ever in the charge of my poor little girl; to watch her carefully, in fact, and never to suffer her to go out alone."

"To watch her!"

"To keep her as a prisoner, if necessary; anything rather than suffer her to meet that young fellow."

"She shall not do that again if I can help it."

"You can help it only by severity. She is an impulsive, headstrong girl—too long spoiled; she must be curbed now, or she will break loose and rush on destruction. Will you promise me, Clarice, to restrain her in my absence?"

"I will do my best; but she will not bear watching."

"She must, under the authority I shall lay on her. But you shall have aid. I expect my young cousin, Raymond Singleton, on a visit to-morrow; he will remain till my return. He knows Myra; they were playmates in childhood. I will remain till he comes, and will speak to him in confidence. I only want your promise to accept the trust I place in your hands, to be fully at rest and secure."

The governess wrung her hands nervously and in perplexity.

"It is not merely as her governess that I ask your care; it is as her friend, as my friend, as the one I most highly esteem—and—"

Clarice's tears would no longer be restrained, but she wiped them hastily away, faltering words of gratitude for such an expression of regard.

"Then you will fulfil my request, my entreaty?" he said, imploringly.

"I will do all I can, I pledge you my word."

"That is all I can expect. I rely on your promise. You have taken a weight from my mind."

"You will speak to Myra—"

"I will. She shall know that all my authority is vested in you during my absence. And it would oblige me farther, my dear friend, if you would give directions to the housekeeper and the servants. They shall be instructed to carry out your wishes in everything."

He recommenced pacing the room, and Clarice understood that the interview was ended, and her farther presence might be embarrassing. As she moved towards the door she bade her host good morning; but he walked hastily after her, seized both her hands, pressed them warmly, and in the most flattering terms thanked her for her compliance, and renewed his expressions of implicit confidence and esteem.

It seemed as if he would gladly have detained her; and she felt strangely agitated as at last she made her escape, and fled up to her own room, where she locked the door and flung herself into a chair, striving to recover the composure that had deserted her when she most needed it.

Raymond Singleton arrived by the coach the next morning. The meeting between him and Myra was a cordial and hilarious one. The young man had been abroad for years in Germany, where his education was completed; since his return home, the death of his father had thrown upon him the entire charge of an estate that, small as it was, needed assiduous care to put it in such order that the income accruing should be made to maintain his mother and himself in even modest competence.

His father's cousin, Halstead, had written again and again to invite the young man to his house; but the visit had been postponed till now. It might have been put off longer but for the urgent advice of his mother that he would accept the invitation without delay.

"You must remember, Ray," the lady said, "that, failing children, you are Cousin Halstead's sole heir."

"But there is no such failure," laughed Ray. "My cousin Myra must be a bouncing lassie by this time."

"She is sixteen."

"As much of a romp as ever?"

"Well, I think not. She has been at school in Richmond, and brought a governess to keep up her music, French and other accomplishments."

"She was a pretty little thing, I remember."

"She is very pretty, and her father no doubt has reasons for pressing you to come."

"What reasons?"

"Don't you know, boy, your father and he always agreed that their children should marry?"

"Yes, I remember. I often called Myra 'little wife.' But Cousin Halstead cannot think of that!"

"Why not? There is no more suitable match. Good blood on both sides, and the estate kept in the family—"

"Too much of the advantage comes to one side."

"To which, pray?"

"Ours, of course. Myra has all the property."

"You are the next heir, and your claims ought to be united."

"I have none while she is living."

"Nonsense; her father sends for you. Don't be blind to your own interests."

Ray was not long in doubt, for his Cousin Halstead took him after dinner into his library and there unfolded to him his own plans. It was his dearest wish to see his daughter married to young Singleton, his nearest blood-relation, the son of his best friend, the representative, after himself, of the family dignity and credit, the legal heir of all his possessions, should fate remove his daughter. Ray's frank and noble character, so like his father's, had always commanded his esteem. And his observation, sharpened by the instinct of parental affection, had not failed to perceive the impression made on the young man by the first sight of his former playmate.

Myra wore that day a delicate, airy muslin, with a brown ribbon confining her rich curls, and was looking like a fresh rose as she stood on the piazza with her father and the governess, whose brunette beauty formed a perfect foil to the bright, blonde loveliness of her pupil, and caused the sunny tresses to appear still sunnier, and the blue eyes to sparkle with a yet deeper azure contrasted with Miss Kent's raven hair and eyes of dusky brilliance.

Mr. Halstead had sent Silas in the dog-cart to meet his expected guest. The vehicle stopped at the rear entrance, and the host received the youth as if he had been a cherished son, taking him at once to the ladies.

Ray felt no slight bashfulness when he saw his little romping companion grown into so lovely a girl. He took her hand respectfully, but did not venture to kiss her pouting lips or her rosy cheek. He gazed intently at her till she blushed and laughed; then he lifted her little hand to his lips and murmured his surprise and admiration. She drew away her hand with coquettish grace and presented the stranger to Miss Kent.

The party walked about the grounds and garden till summoned to the early dinner, and Ray became better acquainted with his gay young cousin, while both talked of their past childhood and its adventures. The young man added anecdotes of his collegiate life abroad, far more amusing than any Myra could tell of her school days. She looked radiant when they came in to dinner, and the governess noted the father's pleased expression as he noticed them. It gave her an insight into his plans, and she inwardly determined to aid them if she could. Had not Mr. Halstead called her his "friend"?

Alone in the drawing-room, after they had left the table, while Myra touched the piano, Miss Kent talked of the new arrival, and drew on her pupil to tell her stories of the days long ago, when the youthful cousins were constant companions, and when every one predicted their marriage.

"But they will be mistaken," added the wilful girl, leaning over so as to rest her head on the shoulder of her preceptor. "I shall never marry any one but Fred Hobart."

"Hush, child! We promised not to mention his name again!"

"I did not promise not to think of him, poor darling. Clarice!" she suddenly exclaimed, starting to her feet. "Don't you think Ray will be good to me, and go in search of Fred, and carry him a message?"

"Certainly not! He would not do anything to displease your father."

"But I will not ask him till papa has gone."

"If your father is absent, so much the more should his wishes be respected."

"Oh, you croaker! I know what it means! you are to watch me, and play the tyrant! But it will be of no use! See if I do not outwit you."

While such scenes went on the drawing-room, the father and Raymond, having finished their wine, adjourned to the library. Handing out a box of fragrant Havanas, amid the curling clouds of smoke, Halstead unbosomed himself to his young friend, who listened, nothing loth. His heart expanded under the knowledge that he was the chosen husband of this charming girl; the chosen inheritor of all this luxury and wealth. With gratified pride he received his cousin's expressions of favour, and avowed his love at first sight.

Halstead told him but little of the presuming young suitor whom he had chastised; but merely warned him that Myra, as a heiress, would be doubtless an object of pursuit to adventurers; and as a giddy, susceptible, foolish child, needed protection and watchful care. To his young cousin he committed her during his absence.

In the soft moonlight that evening the young people walked up and down the broad avenue; and

Ray drank in every moment fresh intoxicating draughts of a happiness he had never known before. He glanced now and then at Mr. Halstead and the governess, seated on the piazza in apparently earnest conversation. Suddenly he stopped, as the moonlight fell upon the lady's face, raised towards that of her companion.

"Where have I seen that face before?" he muttered. "It is strangely familiar."

"Whose? Miss Kent's?" asked Myra. "Do you think her handsome?"

"No—yes; I cannot imagine where I have seen her!"

"Nowhere, Ray; she came from Richmond."

"It was in New York; I am sure of it," said the young man, musingly, with the puzzled expression of one trying to catch what his memory has lost.

"Oh, you must be mistaken, she was never there; and you don't think her handsome? Papa does, I know."

Miss Kent rose and walked the length of the piazza, then turned and came back. The subtle, litho grace of her form and movements reminded Ray of a serpent. A sharp suspicion darted through his brain.

"I have seen her before, and seen her face moved by strong passion. Myra,"—as they resumed their walk—"your father seems to admire her very much."

Myra went on in her voluble way to tell the story of their first acquaintance; how she had been brought to Halstead Grove as her governess, and was entirely trusted by her father.

Ray was silent a long time, and then changed the subject.

Three days after the departure of Mr. Halstead a visitor came to the Grove. His name was Lawrence Wyatt; and he had ridden over from his residence, ten or twelve miles distant, to see his old friend Ray Singleton. He stayed to lunch, but the governess did not appear; a slight indisposition kept her in her room.

The young men had many subjects of conversation. Lawrence, too, had lately returned from a long absence, and had made the tour of Canada and the North-western States.

"We were bound for Europe long before that," he said; "and should have been down on you in Berlin, my boy, while you were green in your studies. But—"

"Why did you not come?"

Lawrence went on to tell a sad story of a misguided young man with whom he had once been rather intimate, but who had gone to the bad—to utter ruin, in spite of his well-meant efforts to save him. The painful story interested young Singleton, who had heard of him in fast circles. He knew nothing, however, of his descent into crime, his detection and disgrace.

"I always heard he was a gambler," he said.

"Was he found out cheating at cards?"

"Worse than that."

"What could be worse?"

"Gentlemen have done that," remarked the young Southerner. "But poor young Ned's crimes were mean and skulking; he stopped at nothing when once plunged in."

He went on to state some particulars, that greatly shocked Raymond.

"If he had not been found out he might have reformed," continued Lawrence. "But after conviction and sentence, you see, he could never hold up his head among decent people."

"What became of him at last?"

"Don't know. There was a report of his death. Hope it was true—for her sake."

"Whose sake?"

"He was very intimate with a beautiful girl; engaged to her, some said, and ought to have been married to her."

"What a pity! fellows of that stamp have no business to drag women down to their level. Who was she?"

"I don't know her name. She was never in society at all. I saw her several times with him at the theatre in New York, and I never saw a more queenly-looking creature. Tall, stately, graceful as a young fawn, glossy black hair, cheeks like the creamy magnolia leaf—"

Ray sprang suddenly to his feet, and caught the arm of his companion.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "I have it! The very same—the very same!"

"What's the matter, Ray?"

"Didn't the girl go upon the stage? Tell me that!"

"That's just what I can't tell you, old boy. I rather think not, however!"

"She did, I am sure of it!" cried the young man, impetuously. "And I saw her and heard her sing in New York. I wondered where I could have seen her."

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[A TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE.]

## THE DOUBLE BONDAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
"The Lost Coronet," "Elgiva," etc., etc.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

Though some spurn Hymen's gentle powers,  
We who improve the golden hours  
By sweet experience know  
That marriage, rightly understood,  
Gives to the tender and the good  
A Paradise below.

"You will suppose my visit here has some especial object, my lord, and excuse the intrusion accordingly," was Mr. Bolton's greeting, as the marquis entered the library where the lawyer was awaiting him. "I am never denied unless with absolute cause," was the cold reply, though its haughtiness was concealed under a veil of outward courtesy. "But my time is brief. Perhaps you will be so kind as to come at once to the point, Mr. Bolton."

"I need scarcely say that my visit has reference to my ward, Miss Loraine, who is betrothed at the present time to your son, my lord," began Mr. Bolton, calmly availing himself of the chair handed to him by the marquis.

"I suppose so. Yet I am at a loss to imagine to what part of the transaction connected with the engagement your visit can refer," was the reply. "I believe that the settlements and dower which appertain to the ladies of the Dorington race are fully equal to the requirements even of an heiress like Miss Loraine."

There was, perhaps, a slight sneer in his tone that did not pass unnoticed.

"I believe I may safely assert that Miss Loraine's fortune is by no means her greatest charm," he replied; "and both in her case and your son's I do not hesitate to say that it is a choice of love on both sides. At least my ward would, I feel certain, have refused Lord Cranmore if she had not loved him; and it would not have been so very difficult for her to have formed an alliance even as illustrious as she is about to make with your house."

"Oh, yes, yes. I do not at all disparage Miss Loraine's claims," said the peer, hurriedly. "You quite mistake my meaning; although," he added, rather loftily, "I for one attach every importance to birth and honourable descent. Only in this case there is luckily no fear of plebeian relatives or disgraceful antecedents."

Mr. Bolton bowed assent. But there was a strange look of half-meaning, half-derision in the momentary curl of his lips that Lord Brunton was fortunately too much engrossed to perceive.

She was performing with an operatic troupe, and had a success. What a discovery; in time too, I hope!" "If you saw her, Ray, there can be no doubt of it, I suppose. Do you know where she is now?"

Ray checked the words that leapt to his lips. To betray a secret of his cousin's household to a comparative stranger—to reveal how that cousin had been duped, might be duped still farther—his gentlemanly instincts would not suffer it. He made some evasive answer, and turned the subject. After Wynt's departure, he took a solitary walk to ponder the situation.

"It is the same woman," he repeated mentally several times. "And placed here as the guide and friend of my lovely young cousin. With antecedents so full of discredit, she must strive to hide them by a public career on the stage; and, that failing her, impose herself on an unsuspecting man as what she now seems. Oh, my lady, you are strangely captivating, with your calm fascination, your serpent grace, your regal beauty. And you are looking to be the mistress here. My victim cousin! He must be warned—he must be warned before it is too late."

He was walking towards the house, and as he emerged from the shrubbery he saw a boy, not one of Mr. Halstead's boys, stealthily moving around the corner in the dusk, and beckoning to some one in the rear of the grounds. Presently a young girl, Myra's own maid, came running to the boy, and received a folded paper from his hands, which she put hastily in her pocket. She gave him some directions Ray could not hear, and then crossed the lawn in front of the drawing-room windows.

Myra was seated at one of these. When she saw the maid coming she started up, came out of the open door, and beckoned eagerly to her. The maid ran to her mistress and gave her the little note, which she seized with a desperate clutch, looking round her with an alarmed expression, as if fearful of being seen. Her whole action, with that of the messenger and the maid, plainly betrayed some plot or some secret which they were anxious to conceal.

Ray saw the girl go after the strange boy, evidently to carry him a message, and he saw Myra kiss the paper she held again and again before she hid it in her bosom, which she did with startled quickness as Miss Kent appeared in the doorway.

"I have more than I bargained for," muttered young Singleton, as he turned away to walk in a different direction. "A mystery about the governess, a mystery with the pupil. Both playing at odds with me and my hopes. This must be a house of secrets."

(To be continued.)

"This is quite a digression," resumed the marquis. "You said you wished to see me relative to the intended marriage. On what account pray?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Precisely on the score of delay, my lord," said the lawyer, firmly. "I find that there are conditions tacked on to Miss Loraine's fortune that make it indispensable the engagement should not last more than six months at the extreme. I believe the proposal was made in September. To stretch the point to the utmost we may call the betrothal October, which gives the end of April as the utmost period for the event. If I am correctly informed the present plans for your daughter, Lady Maud, to be married at the same time, quite put such an arrangement out of the question. How can it be managed?" he went on with a keen look, that said he would not be deceived or put off by any evasion.

Lord Brunton cleared his throat, stirred the fire, arranged the books and papers lying before him with a very needless method, before he replied.

"You are correct, Mr. Bolton, perfectly correct. But I have only now arranged for a Continental tour that is chiefly designed to hasten matters as to these weddings. You cannot doubt my sincerity," he said, "nor wish to be hard on my real powerlessness in the matter."

"No," returned the lawyer, "certainly not, my lord, but I must protect my ward. I do not exactly see that it is an absolute necessity for the marriages to take place together. Why not have your son's celebrated before you go abroad, then all will be clear and straightforward?"

The marquis shook his head.

"Mr. Bolton, as a lawyer, you must have become acquainted with many particulars in family politics. As a nobleman and gentleman, I give you my word that in the present instance such an arrangement would be highly difficult and dangerous, even were it possible. Nay," he went on, in a lower tone, "I do not mind confiding to you so much as this: I am not thoroughly easy about my future son-in-law. There have been some singular reports which have come mysteriously to my knowledge, but which I would neither vouch for nor repeat. I am determined to sift it to the bottom," he continued, seriously. "And when that is done, when I have concluded these plans for my children's settlement, then my mind will be at ease, and I can wait my end with a comparative calmness."

"Your end, my lord? What can you mean?" asked Mr. Bolton, half imagining, perhaps, that it was a species of clap-net to work on his feelings.

"Oh, nothing at all unusual," replied the earl.

"Simply this, that I have more than once been told by my physicians that there is a possibility, if not more than a possibility, that my death may be sudden. And, of course, we all know what that means, that a man may have ten years or twenty before him, or it may be not so many hours; it is not so?"

"Nay, we will hope for better things. That were a very gloomy prospect," returned the lawyer, kindly. "You know these doctors are always the first to predict evil—I suppose in order to bring forward their own skill in the cure."

Lord Brunton shook his head gravely.

"Scarcely," he said, "scarcely. I know enough of medicine to feel sure there is no cure for such a malady as mine. Palliation there may be; but certainly nothing more permanent. And I need scarcely tell you, Mr. Bolton, that under circumstances so painful, even though no one but myself have the burden on my heart, it is simple crassity to urge on me what is not in my power to accomplish."

There was a pathos in the tone, an honest sincerity in the look that could scarcely be mistaken.

And Mr. Bolton, with all his hardened legal experience, his prolonged knowledge of the world, could scarcely doubt his noble host's melancholy candour.

"My dear lord, I will not for an instant at all disguise the truth," he said. "I do from my heart give credence to your statement and see your difficulties. Yet still, you, in your turn, must understand that I am entirely fettered in my actions. I am bound by the power of others. I cannot transgress my instructions. Nor," he added, "can I risk the future and the safety and peace of mind of my ward."

The marquess shrugged his shoulders despairingly. "What can we do?" he said. "You are more fertile in expedients than I am, Mr. Bolton. Surely there must be some mode of evading this barrier to all our hopes and wishes. Are the terms of your instructions really so precise and urgent that they cannot in any way be avoided?"

Mr. Bolton shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly. "I fear, my lord, you would not be willing to adopt the only alternative that I can in any way suggest," he said.

"My good sir, you are deceived. I am certainly bound to a certain extent, bound by the law of society, bound by what I consider due to my family and myself. Nor can I pretend that I am actually and entirely honest in my approbation of the choice my son has made," he went on, rapidly. "Still there are many advantages connected with it in the young girl herself and her accompaniments. And I give you my word that neither she nor her husband, nor any one in the least at all connected with her, will ever take the slightest idea that I do not welcome Gwendolaine as a chosen daughter."

"If I thought there was—" began the lawyer.

But the marquess interrupted him.

"Still she perhaps might retract?" he said. "No, my good sir, no, Gwendolaine is dear to my son, she is my daughter's chosen friend, she is handsome and rich. And it may be, if no adverse circumstances occur, she may become to me as a daughter in heart as in name. But you seem to put difficulties, as yet undreamed of, in the way of the union."

Mr. Bolton had remained in deep thought during the speech.

When it was finished he raised his head, and eyed his host with a quick, sharp gaze.

"If you are honest in your assurances, my lord, I can certainly suggest one, but perhaps only one way of getting out of the dilemma."

"And that?" asked the marquess, doubtfully.

"That," observed the lawyer, "is in my ideas, and when arranged in the manner we contemplate, perfectly feasible and without any shame or humiliation to any of the parties concerned."

"And that?" asked Lord Brunton, doubtfully. "What would you propose, Mr. Bolton?"

The lawyer seemed to hesitate.

There was either a pride for his ward's dignity, that might be endangered by any such proposal as he had to make, or else he feared a refusal more mortifying still.

In any case, there was a pause—a strange, thrilling pause, ere he spoke again.

"My lord," he said, in a low tone, "it seems to me that the matter stands thus: My ward must lose her fortune in one of the alternatives that await us. Or else you fear, from some reason with which I have nothing to do, that a marriage you naturally value for your own daughter will be crushed. Now I have but one idea to suggest that can meet these difficulties. My lord, there have been many cases when, either from the difference of faith or from the law of the land, there have been secret and clandestine marriages," went on the lawyer, after another impressive pause. "Why should there not be some such refuge in the case that so embarrasses us both?"

The marquess answered, haughtily:

"A private, secret marriage! the very idea is degrading!" he said. "The heir of a marquessate scarcely resorts to such extraordinary expedients."

"Princesses of the blood-royal have done so before to-day," replied the lawyer, calmly. "However, it must rest with yourself, my lord. I have no more to say. I can but fulfil my duty."

And he rose as if concluding the interview and preparing to depart.

"No, no; you are so hasty—so abrupt," exclaimed the marquess. "Can you not see it is possible to shrink from the novel and startling idea, even if there is no real or physical cause against it? I do not absolutely reject the proposal."

Still he looked pleadingly—nay, humbly, at the man, so far his inferior in rank; but, in the truest wisdom of the world, and to all possible intent, decidedly his superior.

"My lord," returned Mr. Bolton, calmly, "there must be a decided acceptance, or I should at once break off all the negotiations in the affair. If my ward is, from personal or other advantage, fitted for your son's wife, it can matter little whether they go through one or ten ceremonies to make the affair binding. And if you and the marchioness are present, and thus sanction the marriage, it is impossible to bring any discredit upon it. It may be kept profoundly secret from all, unless some special cause arises to reveal it. As a matter of safety, a grand and elaborate ceremonial some time hence, when Lady Maud may be united to her sister, is by no means inconsistent with it, to my judgment."

Mr. Bolton gave a derisive little sound, between a sigh and a grunt, as he concluded.

It expressed, more perhaps than words, his entire and absolute resolve not to yield one inch—his full conviction that his own was the sole feasible alternative in the present dilemma.

The marquess reflected for a while. There was deliberative, and perhaps repugnant, thought to be traced in every line of his marked features.

Could it be wondered at? Could it be matter for surprise if the possessor of an ancient lineage, the holder of a brilliant coronet, the father of an only son, should recoil from the very shadow of such a proposal?

Still there were reasons even more powerful than Mr. Bolton guessed to bend him to the idea.

And he strove, with all the desperate zeal of a straitened man, to bring himself to the reconciling conviction of the prudence and justice of the proposal.

"You are right, I believe," he said, quickly, after a pause. "I mean right as to the prudence and policy of such an attempt to meet contending claims. But how can you or I be certain that the person principally concerned would be willing to carry out our plans?" he went on. "Perhaps, indeed, I might count on Lord Cramore, who is sufficiently in love to risk any ordeal, but Miss Lorraine—"

"Will be guided by me. I have sufficient proof to believe in her submission," was the reply to the marquess's timid fears. "Gwendolaine is so far daunted by the loneliness of her position and her utter ignorance of all belonging to her as to ensure her dependence on my consent and wishes. It only remains for us to make all necessary arrangements before I leave the Hove, my lord. There can be no doubt that the more speedily this plan is carried out the better."

The marquess again considered thoughtfully for a brief space.

"It seems to me," he said, in his turn, "that the only safe and secret way of carrying out your idea, Mr. Bolton, is to let it be fulfilled abroad. In England, it would be well nigh impossible to prevent gossip and tittle-tattle, however carefully all arrangements were made. But across the seas, where all is different, and every departure from your ordinary rules can create no surprise, the affair will be safe and concealed beyond fear of betrayal. Do you not agree with me?" he added, as he marked his companion's silence.

"Perhaps—well, yes, I will acknowledge there is justice in what you say, my lord," said the lawyer, thoughtfully; "but in the fulfilling of my duty to my ward, and as the originator of the scheme, I or some agent from me shall certainly claim a right to be present at my ward's secret wedding, and at the more public and splendid compliment would willingly waive my right to be representative of her father or guardian on such an occasion."

Lord Brunton gave a glance of surprise; perhaps incredulity. But there could be no actual contradiction in such an interview.

And the marquess wisely turned the subject and his own thoughts to a more pressing interest, which in the course of another half-hour or less was satisfactorily arranged.

Ere the luncheon bell rang the time and place and

circumstances of this bridal were fully agreed upon.

Mr. Bolton declined joining the family at the mid-day meal, and partook of some slight refreshment in the library ere he departed from the Hove.

There was silence and constraint during the meal that ensued, for Lady Maud's keen wits were painfully at work on the subject of the morning's conversation, and Lord Brunton could not altogether discard the gloomy oppression that was weighing on his troubled heart.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

And now I see with eyes serene  
The very pulse of the machine,  
A being breathing thoughtful breath,  
A traveller betwixt life and death.  
The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill,  
And yet a spirit still and bright,  
With something of an angel light.

"Yes, it is about time to start on our homeward journey, my dearest Laura," was the sudden remark of the Count Albert, while he and his wife and their guest sat playing with the cool fruits and wines and ices that succeeded their moderate repast.

They were placed in the verandah of the large apartment that formed their dining saloon, and the air blew in with all the balmy freshness of a "sweet March day."

Spring was in the air, in the sky, and on the budding trees that surrounded them.

But it was not in their minds—at least not in that of the fair woman who played so important a part in the loves and the thoughts of both.

And in that of Sholto, Lord Saville, it was winter—dark, bleak, and chill, so far as his spirits and hopes were in question, and when Laura turned to reply to her husband, the same ice-chill reigned over and paralyzed her whole nerves and faculties.

"I am ready," she said, quietly; "at least in a very few days—I could almost say in one—all will be prepared."

"As usual, ever ready and prompt to comply with your husband's wishes," said the count, gallantly kissing her unresisting hand. "Ah, Saville," he added, turning to his guest, "if you are as lucky in your married life as I am, you will indeed be the envy of all our compeers. But I will not doubt the wisdom of your choice, and I only trust we shall have the happiness of making the acquaintance of the fair bride at no distant day. It will be one of the pleasures to which we shall look forward on our return to England. It is not, Laura?" he said, with a bland smile.

"That must depend on Lord Saville, and on his lady's good pleasure," was the apathetic reply.

Laura seldom appeared to be excited by hope or fear now.

A strange languor and numbness, so to speak, pervaded her whole system of late.

She moved and spoke as if in a dream. The kindest consideration that could be shown her seemed to be the leaving her alone in peace.

Even Sholto could remark the change, though he could scarcely decide on the cause. Whether it were sorrow, or perchance remorse, or it might be tormenting pangs of feeling at his approaching bridal and desertion of herself.

"Lord Saville is perhaps too cautious to pledge himself for his bride," observed the count, covering dextrously the embarrassing pause that succeeded.

"However, to return to more present and pressing topics, I expect letters to-morrow that will fully decide my plan; but, in the meantime, I think I am safe in arranging to start in three days from this date for Havre, en route for England."

Laura bowed assent.

"That will do very well," she replied, quietly.

"I will give proper orders. All shall be ready."

And she rose as she spoke and left the room, as if to carry out her intentions.

The count gazed anxiously after her.

"She is not strong," he said, turning to Sholto with a look of grave sadness. "It is not well to let any invalid know the extent of one's fears, but I confess I am alarmed about Laura. What do you think of her, Saville?"

"I?—oh, really, I am a bad judge of female ailments," returned the earl, starting. "Perhaps there is a little change in the looks of the countess, but I expect the more bracing native air of England will revive her again."

"Heaven grant it," cried the count. "It would be a terrible blow to me, if anything did happen to one who is my all in life. You will ere long enter into such feelings; you cannot now."

"Pray why not?" asked Sholto, suddenly. "I suppose a man is presumed to be in love when he is engaged to be married, is he not?"

"Oh, yes, of course, but that is quite different from the settled, strong marriage love," was the response.



"Any other passion, whether lawful or not, may be fervent and intense, but certainly it will be more fitful and irregular than a husband's. However, I am only boring you with such tattle, but the day may come when you will remember my words," he continued, with a remarkable emphasis that could not fail to impress itself on the hearer.

But Lord Saville had not leisure to reply.

The next moment Meriton's voice sounded with a startling suddenness on their ears.

"The carriage is at the door, signor count," he said. "Will you go to the casino to-night, or not?"

Count Albert shrugged his shoulders.

"What say you, Saville, will you go with me and have an hour's amusement at the table? I shall not stay longer, I assure you."

Sholto hesitated.

But he was in a state that made any kind of excitement desirable. And, glancing at his rather light toilet, he said, in a doubtful tone:

"I really can scarcely tell. I have no overcoat, and I do not quite like appearing at these places in very marked attire, or else I should not care about just killing an hour or so."

"Oh, that is no difficulty," said the count. "We are so nearly of the same size that you might wear one of mine; though, unluckily," he added, with a smile, "the ages are not so coincident as the figures."

"I believe there is a coat of my lord's somewhere in the house," observed the page. "I will look for it, if you please, my lord. You left it here about a fortnight ago, after a storm."

Sholto nodded an assent.

And Meriton disappeared for some moments, while the count excused himself for an instant on the score of informing Laura of his intentions.

But it was something like a quarter of an hour ere they both reappeared, Meriton bearing in triumph the gray surcoat that effectually covered his whole dress, and the count fully prepared for the expedition and evidently in better spirits than before.

"She seems much better," he observed, as they drove to the casino. "I believe you are right. The very idea of going home has revived her. Whatever betides I shall not delay her journey. It is evident that she is pining for her own country, and too unselfish to have pressed her wishes. But I shall be even more determined on that score to carry them out to the very full."

And then the subject dropped, and they soon arrived at the casino, and were quickly engaged in the exciting *Rouge et Noir*.

It was some three days after that evening, and Lord Saville was slowly and reluctantly preparing to fulfil a promise he had made to bid his friends farewell before their departure for Havre.

It was no ordinary leave-taking in his opinion and to his wayward feelings.

Laura was henceforth to be lost to him for ever, save as a memory of the past, that would be buried deep—deep down in his heart, only to spread its fibres more fatally and hopelessly in every nerve—every pulse.

He hated himself for his weakness.

It was, he too well knew, simple treachery to the young and innocent girl he had pledged himself to wed.

In vain he told himself she had dared her fate, that she had accepted him coldly and conventionally, without love or wooing that could justify the act.

It was but a subterfuge and he knew it.

And he knew also that the persuasion which he strove to entertain that his feelings for Laura were consistent with his bridal vows was vain and false. True, his conduct had been honourable so far as his intercourse with the wife of Count Albert de Fontane was concerned.

His conscience was clear so far.

He could face Laura's husband, Maud's father and a whole world, and yet fearlessly and truthfully swear to her innocence and his own.

But the wreck of her happiness, the theft of her love, and the barren gift of his hand to her rival were surely to be thought of—to be meditated on with penitence.

The English mail had come in, and there were letters which he had not yet opened.

He was postponing their perusal till Laura and her husband were gone.

It was a weakness, perhaps, and he knew it. And as if by a desperate effort, and almost as a sort of penance, he tore open one from Lord Brunton, though Lady Maud's delicate writing and feminine misiv was still thrust in his pocket, unsealed and unread.

The letter from the marquis was brief.

But still it brought a hot flush to the young man's face that spoke of some sudden and unpleasant surprise. There was a short but poignant sentence that ran thus:

"I have not been very well in health lately, and I have been ordered by my physician to try what a complete change of air will do for my recovery; and therefore I have decided to take the marchioness and Maud abroad for a short time, and very likely Miss Lorraine will accompany us. We are, however, extremely anxious not in any degree whatever to interfere with the freedom of your plans and actions," the letter went on, "as we shall carefully avoid taking any direction that can in any way bring us in contact with you during your period of liberty and solitude. I have not indeed actually arranged our route, but in all probability we shall make for the south of France as our destination, and after a few weeks of balmy air and blue skies, return to the Hove, to prepare for the all-important events in prospect. However, Maud will keep you posted up in our movements."

Sholto crushed the letter in his hand, with a dark frown and impatient gesture.

"Stuff! hypocrisy!" he muttered. "As if I am to be thus deceived and bamboozled by such empty professions, and as if I could believe they are coming here except for the purpose of hunting me up. But they shall be disappointed. I will take good care to prevent their getting scent of my movements till too late to act upon them. Bah! this is too much. There will be quite enough slavery and misery after marriage without forestalling them now."

He caught sight of the timepiece on the table as he gave this vent to his excitement, and perceived that his time was nearly up.

It might be that the letter he had just perused had sharpened and aggravated his determination; for he made rapid preparations for his departure from his own dwelling, and rushed violently to the apartments of the count, with an eagerness that could scarcely have been ascribed to friendship alone. But it appeared to be in vain.

"Please, my lord, the count and countess have left only five minutes, but they desired me to say, if you followed them to the station there would be plenty of time. The train does not go till one-twenty; only the countess had a call to make at some place on her way, so they had to set off earlier," was the greeting of the concierge.

Lord Saville scarcely waited for the conclusion of the sentence, but rushed off in the direction indicated at a headlong pace.

And the porter of the establishment gazed after him with a suspicious anxiety.

"That is curious," he muttered. "Monsieur is very anxious to see them, that is clear. I wonder whether it is the count or countess for whom he has so warm a regard?"

His efforts nevertheless were crowned with success. He rushed into the railway station at least some five or ten minutes before the train was due, and in the very first room he entered into Count Albert was anxiously waiting to receive him.

"Ha! Saville, well met! I am indeed thankful to see you!" he exclaimed, his whole manner hurried and excited by some sudden agitation. "I have a favour to ask of you, that I would not receive from any other living man. I have this moment had a telegram summoning me to Paris on urgent business that may detain me some hours, perhaps days. Laura is so ill and nervous this morning that I dare not trust her alone with servants," he continued, hurriedly. "Would it be too much to ask you to escort her so far as Havre? It would only be some two or three hours' journey, and when once there Meriton and her maid could place her on board the steamer for England, and all fear be at an end. Would it be too great a tax on your complaisance, my dear fellow?"

A combination of circumstances rendered the request more feasible to Sholto's mind. Hesitation, love, pique, pity joined in a pleading chorus.

And ere he had time to resist or consider the arguments, his consent was given.

"Certainly—I am flattered by the trust. Where is the countess?" he returned.

It was no long process to discover her.

The lady was safely ensconced in the corner of one of the most luxurious first-class carriages.

Her face brightened with a sad smile as she saw Sholto's approach.

"Thanks, thanks," she said, feebly, "this is very good of you."

There was something peculiar in her very tone, and even Sholto shivered slightly at the unnatural accent and the veiled figure of which he could scarcely discern the face.

But there was little time to consider its demeanour. The whistle was sounding; the indescribable and incomprehensible row of a French station in its very height.

Sholto leaped into the carriage of which she was sole tenant, and the next minute the train whirled off.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

Oh, gently on thy suppliant's head,  
Dread goddess, lay thy chastening hand,  
Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,  
Nor circled with the vengeful brand.

"BERNARD, it is so strange—surely it must be wrong. I can scarcely dare to go through it," said Gwenda, shivering, as Lord Cranmore stood anxiously at her side in the large sheltered courtyard of a Paris hotel, with its trained shrubs and tall surrounding walls.

The young pair had strolled out after breakfast, while the servant had retired to make all necessary preparations for what was to be the great event of the day.

And the shrinking, timid attitude of the one and the eager, proud triumph of the other of the two might easily enlighten even a casual observer as to the subject of their conversation.

"My darling, be reasonable; consider all the circumstances of the case, the motives for the whole proceeding, and you surely cannot hesitate," rejoined Bernard.

"Why? how? for what?" she exclaimed, impetuously. "We are to violate conventional law and custom, to infringe the delicacy of my sex, and to have the continual memory of the miserable proceeding all our lives long."

"Nonsense, Gwenda, nonsense," he said, impatiently, for his forbearance was nearly exhausted. "Surely the marquis and marchioness are better judges than you or I of what is right, and if they give their full and hearty sanction what more can you wish? You will have parents at last, my love, and me for the relationships of brother, lover, husband all in one. Can you hesitate? can you fear, my own love?" he went on, drawing her to him and pressing a soft kiss on her lips.

It was tempting indeed.

A few words, another brief hour, and her fate would be sealed.

She would be Lady Cranmore, the elect Marchioness of Brunton, the wife of him she loved, without fear or power of change.

And yet she trembled. A cold chill ran through her veins, a presentiment of evil that was unaccountable as the dread of a young and enthusiastic girl of so tempting a prospect.

Was it an omen for her good, or a nervous and weak, if maiden, terror of what awaited her?

But there was little time now. She was to join the marquis and marchioness, Lord Cranmore and Maud in half an hour from that time, and she felt a need, a longing to commit her future to Heaven's guidance and protection, which had but too seldom haunted her in her past life of girlish happiness. So she quietly withdrew from her lover's arms and sought her chamber, with the trembling step and beating heart that the strange and secret impending bridal might well have caused in a maiden not yet seventeen.

It was a brief but fervent prayer that she offered up, and when it was at last disturbed by a pre-emptory summons there was at least the calming influence that such an appeal to the Omnipotent spreads over the breast of a true worshipper.

She walked from the apartment with a calmer and firmer mien than could have been believed possible in the young, agitated breast.

She looked lovely indeed in her simple robe of thick white cashmere, falling in soft folds round her graceful form. Her hair was gathered up in rich, massive curls, and a diamond and opal pin fastened its heavy braids. All was so unpretending, so maidenly, yet so bridelike, that had she studied to the very uttermost she could not have arranged her whole demeanour one shade more befitting the part she was to play.

She entered the apartment where the marriage ceremony was to take place so noiselessly that only the quick senses of the bridegroom-elect could detect her advent.

But he sprang forward to lead her to the spot where his parents sat in agitated expectation. Lord Brunton gravely kissed his daughter-elect with evident satisfaction, though his face was unusually pale, and Gwenda fancied that the hand which held hers for a moment had an icy coldness unnatural in that atmosphere. Then the marchioness lightly touched her brow. Lady Maud placed herself near her at the temporary altar that had been improvised. A clergyman, in full canonicals, who might have been mistaken for a Roman priest, stood behind the supposititious rail with a large prayer-book in his hand.

He had scarcely the dignified air of an English clergyman whom nothing would induce to outstep the strict orthodox rules; but still he had sufficient breeding and presence to fill well and creditably his part. And his voice, as he began the ceremony, was sonorous, distinct and impressive as could be desired by the most exacting of critics.

The solemn words were read that announce the

marriage rite. Gwenda's heart beat thick and fast as each moment brought nearer the crisis which would decide beyond drawback her future fate, and bring on her tongue the irrevocable vows. The moment came at last.

The solemn promises had to be pronounced, and low but distinctly Gwenda Loraine spoke her promise to love, honour and obey Bernard, Lord Cranmore; to be his true and faithful wife till death should them part.

Then the clergyman turned to the marquis with the usual question:

"Who gives this woman to be married to this man?"

The marquis bowed his head in assent.

His lips appeared to move, but yet no sound issued from his tongue.

Then he feebly extended his hand and took the young bride's in his grasp.

But Gwenda could hardly suppress a cry of horror at the touch.

It was so cold, so feeble, so unnatural, that it sent a chill to her very heart. Perhaps her irresistible though scarcely uttered exclamation attracted attention to Lord Brunton's ashen looks.

For the clergyman stopped the continuation of the service, and held the ring which he was about to hand to Lord Cranmore to place on the bride's finger.

The pause was but for a moment.

The next moment Lord Brunton staggered, and fell senseless on the chair from which he had but lately risen.

And to the more experienced eyes of the clergyman it was soon apparent that the attack was no ordinary swoon, no passing malady.

There was the pallor of death on the features, the powerless rigidity of death in the limbs as they hastily bore him to a couch.

Lady Brunton waited in helpless agony as she knelt by the sofa on which her husband was laid—herself well-nigh as unconscious of what was passing as the sufferer himself.

And Bernard even stood appalled and stunned at the sudden horror of the catastrophe.

Death in the midst of his bridal vows with the fair and loved one at his side, and all but made his own, was indeed a terrible and bewildering event that might excuse such a paralyzed helplessness even in the stoniest and most manly heart.

But Lady Maud alone preserved her self-possession and firmness in that awful catastrophe.

She walked to the bell, and rang it with a violent energy that quickly brought a reply to the summons. And then her orders were given distinctly and calmly, though her voice was low and unnatural.

"Send for the nearest doctor, bring brandy and vinegar, and send Manette," she said to the servant who appeared.

Meanwhile she loosened the dress and chafed the cold hands, and held strong salts to the insensible nose with eager and skilful rapidity.

But in vain.

No trace of revival, not even the quiver of an eyelid rewarded her care.

The features and the limbs only increased in their rigid helplessness as minutes went on.

And when the doctor arrived and examined the sufferer, it needed scarcely his sad shaking the head and measured words to convey the awful truth.

Lord Brunton was dead, his wife a widow, his daughter fatherless, and Gwenda Loraine only a half-wedded bride.

(To be continued.)

## ADRIEN LEROY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Maurice Durant," "Fickle Fortune," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER XIII.

But 'midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of

men,

To hear, to see, to feel and to possess,

And roam along, the world's tired denizen,

With none who bless us, none whom we

can bless.

HARASSED by that restlessness which characterizes

all votaries of pleasure, Adrien Leroy soon wearied of Barminster Castle.

On the third day after Mr. Jasper Vermont's sudden departure for town, Adrien announced that engagements would take him to London, and his guests having already left the castle, his servants prepared for their master's journey to take place in the morning.

That night the baron dined with his only son, and Lady Constance, whose soft, melting eyes for all their languor were quick to observe, noticed that the old man's manner was a trifle less stern and morose, and that during the pauses in the conversation, in which he scarcely joined, he glanced at the handsome, re-

poseful face which so nearly copied the hauteur of his own, with a thoughtful and somewhat gentle expression.

"You go to-morrow, then?" said Lady Constance, as Adrien entered the saloon drawing-room, the baron having retired to his private chambers.

"Yes," he answered, sinking into the soft lounge at her side. "To-morrow at ten—before you are up, sweet cousin."

"For shame!" she said, with her high-bred laugh. "You libel me; I always breakfast with the baron, remember, and he is an early riser."

"Ah, I forgot," said Adrien.

Then, after a pause, he looked at her and added:

"What would the baron do without you, Constance? I know not. You are like a daughter to him."

Lady Constance's eyes drooped and she smiled faintly.

"Say rather he is like a father to me."

"You are a better daughter than I am a son to him," said Adrien, still looking at her and wondering why her exquisite beauty did not touch him.

"You do not see him often," admitted Lady Constance, who knew to a day how often Adrien had visited the castle during the last twelve months, for had she not sighed at his absence?

"No," he said, "not often. I have many claims, engagements more than I can fulfil. How is it we see so little of you in town? We can ill afford to lose you."

"I am not over fond of the gaieties," answered Lady Constance. "And besides there is another reason—we are poor, you know."

"Forgive me," said Adrien, quickly. "I had forgotten—who could remember it while looking at you—so rich in beauty and in grace? Poor! You are an empress, Constance."

She smiled and toyed with her fan.

"An empress dethroned—or rather uncrowned," she said, softly.

He glanced at her, then looked aside.

Had her words any significance?

He almost fancied they had.

Dethroned! Did she know of Haidee, Lady Eveline? Uncrowned! Was it possible that she could be as eager for his hand as the baron was for him to bestow it on her?

"Such a royal brow needs no crown," he said, ignoring any significance. "You have but to smile, Constance, and universal sovereignty is yours."

She rose, with a little laugh.

"Flatterer! I know not whether to smile or sigh at your compliments."

"The baron would sneer," said Adrien.

Lady Constance nodded.

"Life is one round of mockery to him," she said, gravely.

"And to me too, I think," he muttered, inaudibly, "did you but know it, fair Constance."

"And when will Barminster Castle see its heir again?" she asked, turning over the leaves of her music folio.

"When?" he repeated. "I cannot say. Jasper Vermont could tell you if he were here, I daresay; he keeps the memoranda of my pleasure engagements as methodically as he does the business ones. Soon, I hope."

Lady Constance, who, however much she might have disliked Mr. Vermont, never expressed it to Adrien, looked up.

"Not until the next steeplechase, I suppose. What is the next?"

"The Brigades, two months hence, I think."

"The King will run, I suppose?" asked Lady Constance.

"Yes, and I shall ride him," said Adrien.

She inclined her head.

"I am not surprised after that stupid jockey's blunder and the accident," she said. "For the future then he will run only in gentlemen's races?"

"Yes," he answered. "No jockey shall ever mount him again."

"You will save some thousands by that resolution," she said, looking down at her music again.

He laughed.

"I never thought of that; but I daresay I shall. Jasper will be delighted, he is always begging me to cut down my expenses. I don't know for what reason."

Lady Constance glanced from the window thoughtfully.

"Surely he does not know of your immense income."

"Oh, yes," said Adrien, carelessly. "Still he wishes me to retrench. Jasper is a good fellow."

"Yes," said Lady Constance. "A most useful friend I should think."

"Indeed yes," said Adrien. "And now are you going to sing?"

"It will wake aunt I am afraid," said Lady Con-

stance, glancing at Lady Penelope, where she reclined on a settee comfortably asleep.

"Never mind," said Adrien. "She will forgive you."

He rose and walked to the piano, arranged the music, and remained leaning on the instrument while she sang.

Beautiful voice, beautiful face, beautiful in everything.

Why could he not love her?

That was the question he asked himself, and he almost started when she ceased, and looking up, said:

"Have you forgotten the bal masqué?"

"Yes," said Adrien, candidly—he never uttered a falsehood even conventionally—"quite. Forgive me. I promised to ask the baron, did I not? And will do so to-night. I now, one more song, and then farewell."

"Till Mr. Jasper allows us to meet again," said Lady Constance, sweetly.

Adrien smiled, but did not answer, and Lady Constance breathed out one of Byron's plaintive chants, and then rose to wake Lady Penelope, who had slept throughout the whole of the conversation and the melodies.

"Going, Adrien? Well, good-night, my dear. Oh, going to town—to-morrow too! So soon! I shall not see you again then."

So, half asleep, Lady Penelope kissed him on the forehead and left the room, and Lady Constance a chance—if she could take it—of a warmer farewell.

"Good-night, fair cousin," said Adrien, holding out his hand, "and farewell too."

"Good-night," she said, laying her white, soft hand in his. "Good-night, and a pleasant journey."

"Will you not wish me a speedy return?"

"That might be an ill wish," she said, smiling, "if you do not care to come."

"That's true, or would be if I did not, but I do; so will say here is to a speedy return, Constance," and he bent his head, and touched her hand with his lips.

The gems on her many rings flashed brightly, but not more brightly than her eyes as she crimsoned under the caress, and, sighing, softly withdrew her hand and glided from the room.

Adrien looked after her and strolled to the piano, letting his fingers touch the keys idly.

"Beautiful as a vision! Why cannot I love her?" he asked himself again.

Then, with a gesture of impatience, strode from the room and up the corridor leading to the baron's apartments.

Next morning at ten o'clock the courier was wringing the echoes with his horn, and Lady Constance from her stained latticed window saw the hair of Barminster, followed by the servants and a crowd of dogs, saunter into the yard.

He was to ride the distance, and his new purchase, the cob, stood champing his bit in the courtyard and striking fire from the flints with his steel-shod feet.

Adrien leapt into the saddle, and nodding to the man at the horse's head, was about to start, when a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and turning the cob round he looked up at Lady Constance's window. She saw the movement, and stretching out her hand uplifted the bolt.

The casement flew open and revealed her beautiful head framed as a picture by Vandyke.

Adrien looked up, bowed his head and kissed his hand.

She shook hers in return, and watched him with an eagerness he could not see, while he made a gesture to one of his men, who ran into the lodge and brought a sheet of paper.

Adrien wrote something on this with his diamond-studded pencil, and folding it, gave it to the man with a message, then raising his hat again, he galloped over the great arch.

A few minutes after the groom of the chambers brought Lady Constance the note.

She opened it and read:—"The baron grants us the bal masqué. We will make it an eventful one."

"We will if the fates are kind," she murmured.

"I accept your challenge, Adrien Leroy. Let those win who may. What a stake I fight for!" she added, glancing round her boudoir and then through the window at the magnificent vista of land and trees.

"What a stake! It is worth an effort of wit and woman's patience."

To the astonishment of every one in the place, Mr.

Vermont arrived at the castle a few hours after Adrien had started.

He came unattended and riding a stout, fast looking hack presented to him by his friend.

"My lord has gone on," said the porter.

"Gone!" repeated Mr. Vermont, with an elevation of the eyelids. "And only a few hours since. Then I must have missed him at the cross roads. I came across the heath."

He dismounted as he spoke and walked towards



the entrance to the side hall. Several servants preceded him, bowing obsequiously; for next to the sun there is nothing better than the moon, next to my lord Adrien his friend and confidant Jasper Vermont. But Mr. Vermont waved them aside and entered the reception-room.

"You would like some lunch, sir?" said the house steward, coming forward respectfully.

Mr. Jasper nodded.

"A simple something, Mr. Judson," he said. "A glass of Haut Brion and a raised pie?" Oh, thank you, yes."

And Mr. Judson turned off to fulfil the commands.

Mr. Vermont dropped into a chair and sat calmly regarding the scene through the open window, and, strange to say, a similar thought to that which Lady Constance had put into words ran through his astute mind.

"It is a large stake and worth playing carefully for."

"Awkward, my missing him," he muttered, smoothing the outside of his breast-pocket as he spoke, under which were some deeds and documents requiring Adrien's signature. "He would have signed them without looking at them here; at his chambers he may to amuse himself glance at the headings. Let me but get his name to these and I can feel surer of my game. No need to trouble or to doubt. However, as yet all has gone well. Would I were as sure of all my chances as I am of him; but of others there is no such certainty. For instance!" he murmured, as the curtains swung aside and Lady Constance Tremaine glided down the steps and paused before him.

Mr. Jasper Vermont bowed low and with that soft, oily grace peculiar to him, and which, notwithstanding its noiseless, half satirical nature, was not without its charm.

Lady Constance just lowered her head the slightest and looked at him, or rather through him into worlds behind him, as a monarch would look at a scullion, then extended her hand.

Mr. Vermont took it, pressed it, and suddenly let it fall.

There was a Mephistophilean audacity in the sudden loosening of the white hand that attracted the haughty woman's attention, and her eyes seemed to have something of interest in them as she looked at him again.

"I hope I see your ladyship well," said Mr. Jasper Vermont, leaning against the window and half turning to the view, and so keeping his own face well in the shadow, while every feature of hers stood plainly revealed to him in the lurid glare of light.

In such little matters as the arrangement of lights and shadows Mr. Vermont could boast of a stage-manager's adroitness.

"I am very well, I thank you, Mr. Vermont. Do you know that Mr. Leroy started for London at ten o'clock?"

"I have just heard it," said Mr. Jasper, "and was surprised. It is rather sudden, is it not? I understood from him that he intended staying here at least a week."

This was shaft number one, and though Lady Constance's well-bred face showed no sign, it hit home.

"So he had intended staying a week, had he?" she thought, "and he had tired of Barminster and her in four days!"

Mr. Jasper knew the thought as well as if she had spoken it, and continued with a slight depression of the eyelids:

"Yes, Adrien is changeable, one can never count upon his movements; following him is like wild-duck shooting, down the river on Monday and up the fens on Tuesday. I am sorry I have missed him, for I have a matter of business which demands his immediate attention."

Lady Constance inclined her head.

"You will know where to find him?" she said.

She put it as a question as much as an assertion, for she was anxious to know where Adrien had gone.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Jasper, glancing at her from the corners of his steel eyes, and aiming his second shaft carefully. "He will be at the theatre amongst his actors—and actresses to-night or at the Countess of Morivale's."

Lady Constance's eyelids fluttered, and that was all. "He is often at the latter place?" she said, carelessly.

"Often?—nearly always," said Mr. Jasper. "The countess is a charming woman."

"So I have heard," said Lady Constance, moving to the table and seating herself. "What is your last success at the 'Casket,' Mr. Jasper?"

"Mine?" echoed Mr. Jasper, raising his eyebrows.

"Are you not the real, if not ostensible manager of that expensive amusement?" said Lady Constance. "If you are not the world gives you too much credit or—wronge you to a like extent."

He bowed, smiled and stroked his upper lip.

"No, I have nothing to do with that whim of Adrien's, save pay the actors and actresses sometimes. He has the entire management, and I am not answerable for its failures or to be credited with its successes. I fear your ladyship places more to my charge than I deserve."

Lady Constance smiled, and regarded him calmly but keenly, a regard which he returned unflinchingly.

"We know that you are a great and a true friend of Adrien's, and that you serve him most faithfully and most amazingly. We are sure he is sensible of the inestimable value of such service, and is grateful."

"You are most kind, Lady Constance," returned Mr. Jasper, and in the words and the bow which accompanied them there was an infinite mockery more or less acute for its careful suppression. "Dare I offer such poor service to your ladyship, and protest that what humble abilities I may possess are at your ordering?"

"I thank you, Mr. Vermont," said Lady Constance, rising. "You forget that I have no need of such talents as you possess. I am neither rich nor powerful, have so few pleasures that they can well be managed by myself, and, above all, could make no return for such disinterested faithfulness."

"No return," he said, with a strange accent, that arrested her steps as they were carrying her from him. "No return! You forget, Lady Constance, that disinterested friendship looks for none. You will not accept my offer of service, but notwithstanding I am still your slave and—if I dare use so sacred a word—your friend."

His bow would have done credit to a Richelieu, and Lady Constance returned it with an imperial smile and glided into the lower hall.

Mr. Jasper raised his head and returned to his contemplation of nature in profound silence, which not even the entrance of a choice luncheon could for the while raise him from.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

Let me as the wild-wood flowers be  
Uncheered and solitary still, but free.  
For charity is hard of hand  
That weaves around my heart a band.

"A roof of thatch is better than that of Heaven," is a Spanish proverb, and means, no doubt, that the poorest home is better than none, or that which the streets provide.

Reah, clinging to the Sister of Mercy's succouring hand, was led from the silence of the streets to the still greater silence of an attic in a quiet by-way.

Here, seated by the remains of a small fire in a narrow grate, she watched with awakened interest, that was more like pure indifference, the efforts of the sister to get a kettle of water to boil.

Soup was warmed for her; but for a time she refused to have it.

The warm southern blood in the girl was heating itself into fever, and she spurned even the hand of such gentle charity as that which was extended to her.

"I am not hungry," she said. "Only tired, so tired! Why did you wake me, lady?"

"I woke you because you were unhappy, and it was dangerous for one so young as you to lie asleep in the streets," replied the meek-eyed sister. "And you must not call me 'lady'; I am not a lady. Call me 'sister.'"

"But you are not my sister," said Reah, petulantly. "I haven't any sister, or brother, or father or mother."

"Poor thing!" said the sister, who while she had been speaking had made up a bed, plain enough, but luxurious after the cold doorsteps, and now helped Reah to undress. "Poor thing, you are quite cold, and what are all these bruises? Ah, me! why will men be so cruel when Heaven is so kind?"

"I don't know," said Reah, who took the question as one directed to herself and which she was expected to answer. "I don't know anything. Besides, all men ain't cruel. He wasn't cruel; he was kind, oh, so kind!" and she put up her hands with a deep sigh.

"He! Whom?" said the sister. Then as the girl did not reply she looked hard at her and sighed again.

"Now you will sleep," she said. "And when you wake I will give you food. Will you kiss me?"

Reah, with the impulsiveness of girlhood, threw her white, gleaming arms round the linen-banded neck and kissed the sister's pale face.

"Good night," she said. "I am so tired, so tired."

The sister smoothed the coarse pillow, covered her with a plain coverlet, and stole softly from the room.

When Reah woke the sister was beside her with a cup of tea and some bread and butter.

But the girl refused them.

"I am not hungry, I am not tired now either, and I will go."

The sister put her hand upon her arm. "Not yet," she said. "Where have you to go?"

"Nowhere," said Reah.

"Then stay with me," said the sister, kindly. "See," and she brought a basket to the bedside. "Here's some work; I will teach you to do this and we will live together. Will you not stay?"

Reah looked at the work, and silently nodded an acquiescence.

But she sighed. To such a nature as hers freedom was more precious even than life, and she felt that she was bartering her safety for worthless food; besides, however could she follow the being who had been so kind to her, so kind to her when even this gentle-faced woman called men cruel!

But she stayed and patiently worked all day, striving earnestly to catch the knack of the needle and emulating the tireless industry of the religious, who worked thus during daylight that she might pursue her mission of mercy and succour at night.

Thus passed two days, and then Reah's blood got restless, the narrow room grew stifling and unendurable, and she pined for the open air as a caged blackbird thirsts for its native woods.

The longing grew so irresistible that at last she succumbed, and throwing down the piece of work which she was employed on, she rose, burst into tears, and snatched up her weather-stained hat.

"I can't stay," she murmured. "I can't breathe. I must go, I must see him or I shall die. I'll go before she comes back. Oh, I wish she hadn't been kind to me. I'm a worthless, miserable, ungrateful creature."

And then she stole down the stairs very much as she had slipped away from Adrien's cabinet, and gained the streets.

It was the night of the day of Adrien's return to town.

Ignorant, of course, that he had ever left it, Reah found her way to his chambers, and waited there patiently and hungrily, in hopes of seeing him.

Then as the clock struck eight, she moved sorrowfully away, and leaving the quiet squares, made for the crowded thoroughfares.

"Anything would be a relief," she thought, after the silent disappointment she had endured in that noiseless square, and the crowds pushing and jostling her brought her a wild sort of satisfaction.

The crowd was dense that night, and at one point of the hard-paved footway had culminated into a compact mass waiting at the door of a theatre, and watching a handsome carriage that had just driven up opposite the brilliantly-lighted façade.

She was compelled to pause, and with the others she watched the carriage listlessly.

But suddenly her indifference gave place to a feverish eagerness.

The door had been thrown open by a footman and two gentlemen had descended, one was he, the man she had ensnared in her inmost heart.

The colour forsook her face, her lips parted, and she swayed back, half fearful, half desirous that he should see her.

But he seemed not to see even the foremost members of the crowd, not to hear their murmurs of recognition and admiration—for a crowd will give vent to its admiration of a man as often as it will of a woman, and as heartily, if it be in a good humour—and, with that half-weary and quiet look which she remembered and had marvelled at when he carried her in his arms, he turned and held out his hand to assist a lady to alight.

Reah's eyes flashed from his face to the woman's, and grew transformed to a dark red.

"She is beautiful," she murmured, breathlessly.

"She is beautiful and she is with him."

All her love was mixed with the gall and acid of jealousy.

She felt that she could have flown at the handsome face and beaten it into the dust. Beautiful and with him!

Oh, Heaven, what agony it was! What had that beautiful woman done that she should enjoy such bliss as to lean upon his arm, to look up in his face, to feel his smile?

The mad, passionate girl clenched her hands till the tiny finger-nails cut her soft palms.

Oh, had she followed him for this; not to learn that she is as nothing—that she knew already—but to see a woman clinging to his arm?

She stifled a cry, then stood silent and breathless. He was speaking.

"Wait here at eleven."

"At eleven," she thought, "then he will come out then. I will be here and see him."

She turned to push through the crowd, but having gazed its fill it was not satisfied without a little gossip, and with open ears she waited and listened.

"Handsome woman? I should think so," said a man, addressing another who had made a remark on the lady's beauty in particular, and the crowd in general. "She's the biggest beauty we've got on the stage; that's what makes them so precious polites, you see. Besides, she belongs to him. Know him? Of course I do, who don't? That's Leroy, the richest man in London. He owns this theatre, and a pretty penny it costs him, leastways not so much the theatre, don't yer see, but the pretty creatures in it. Her name's Haidee, and she's a Jewess. I've seen her often, 'cos my brother helps with the scenes, and I've gone on behind."

"And who was the gentleman with them?" asked the other; "some celebrity too, I suppose?"

"I don't know his name," replied the first, "but you allers see him with the other swell. He's a knowing one, you can tell, and wouldn't stand much nonsense, but he ain't like Leroy. There ain't the breed in him. There ain't no breed in him. The other might be a dook for the look of him, but this one's more like a Frenchman. Look here, here is a regular Frenchman," he added, as another brougham drove up, and the Duc d'Olivier, Pomfrey, and the marquis alighted.

"These are regular tip-top swells, mind you," said the communicative individual, with all an Englishman's adoration for birth, "none of your make-shifts. That's a born dook, and that there's a marquis. Lord! this 'ere 'Casket' is crammed with 'em to-night, 'cos it's the fashion, do yer see, and it don't matter what's going on, or whether it's amooosin' so long as it's the fashion."

"Just so," said the little man; "and then Miss Haidee is the fashion, is she?"

"Yes, she is," assented the other, "quite the tip-top. Money itself can't buy all they wants sometimes. She's got a house to live in like a duchess, eats off gold and silver, and all for a pretty face."

Reah, sick at heart with jealousy and bewilderment, for it is scarcely necessary to say that she did not understand one quarter of the meaning of what she heard, turned away, and she left the crowd still gazing and chattering.

The unfortunate comedy which Miss Haidee had so strongly condemned had been hastily withdrawn, and to-night a new burlesque was produced in its stead.

No expense had been spared in the mounting, as usual, and Adrien's money had been poured out like water on French costumes, gorgeous scenery, marvellous machinery, and fifty other embellishments for the new piece of elaborate and senseless burlesque.

But the people loved burlesque, and the "Casket" was crammed.

Haidee, the popular favourite, could dance if she could not act, and she could shout a vulgar patter song if she could not sing, so what with the chance of receiving another "hongkore" with the breakdown, and the string of vulgar slang, she was bustling about the green-room radiant with anticipatory triumph and vanity.

"Well, Mortimer," said Adrien, as the cynic approached him where he leant against a wing smoking a cigar and languidly watching the waste and extravagance of a band of coryphæes, utterly indifferent to the fact that the said waste was at his expense, "are the gods cheerful and amiable?"

"Very," said Mortimer. "They generally are at a sacrifice; and you are a popular one of theirs. They like you; you bleed so freely and send such a sweet incense to their nostrils. What has this piece of tomfoolery cost you?"

"I don't know, or care," laughed Adrien, knocking the ash from his cigar. "Ask Pomfrey, he wrote it, and has had the management—or better still, Jasper, who pays the bill. But this will be a success, Mortimer, and I shall make a fortune."

"For Pomfrey and Mr. Jasper," interrupted Mortimer Shelton, quietly. "Yes, I understand. Ah, here goes the tigress. Well, Miss Haidee, haven't you a word for me?"

"I hate you!" said Miss Haidee, flashing her superb eyes at his satirical face.

Adrien laughed, and Mortimer joined it with evident enjoyment.

"And I, to follow the copybook, ought to love you, for that was truth. You do hate me, I know. Come and let me open a bottle of champagne for you."

"No, I shan't," said the popular favourite. "Ain't you coming to see me go on, Hadrien?"

"I can see you from here," said Adrien, indolently. "You look charming, my dear Haidee, does she not, Mortimer?"

"Most beautiful, too beautiful," said Shelton, bowing low.

Haidee pushed out her lips at him, cast a spiteful glance at Adrien, and, accompanied by a burst of music, bounded on to the stage.

Mortimer watched her with a sneer.

"Hark how they applaud," he said, glancing up at the crowded and delighted house. "What is Shakespeare's rant to such a breakdown? Long live Mademoiselle Haidee. Shakespeare was an old woman and is out of date! Why don't you get rid of that painted vixen, Adrien?"

"Because—I don't know," said Adrien, smiling.

"Because you are afraid of her," said Mortimer. "Ah, you may raise your eyebrows, my friend, but it is the solemn truth. Your fine nerves are so exquisitely strung that you dread a scene as a musician does a false note, and you would rather face a cannon's discharge than an angry Haidee's hysterical reproaches. Bah! you are cowards all of you, your wealth buys you nothing but pleasures that dance hand-in-hand with pain. I'm disgusted with the world."

"Then why don't you leave it?" murmured Adrien. "For the same reason that suffices you," said the cynic, moving away. "We are neither sure that we shall not be more disgusted with the next."

Adrien laughed, but there was a sigh at the end of it, which was smothered with a smile as half a dozen pretty princes in silver gauze clung round him bagging for bonbons.

"Do you girls think I am made of bonbons?" he exclaimed, without moving from his graceful position.

"Come, run away and be ready. Are you not called on in the next scene?"

"Oh, Mr. Leroy, it is such a success, and we have danced so hard, do give us some," they chimed out.

"Well, go to Mr. Jasper, and ask him," said Adrien, waving his hand.

And away they ran, sweeping past Mortimer, who shrugged his shoulders at the marquis significantly and murmured:

"Always Mr. Jasper."

At eleven o'clock the crowd, hot, perspiring, but excited and satisfied, poured out of the "Casket."

It was a fine night and the groups of pleasure-seekers were not melted away for half an hour; even after then the slight girlish form still lingered near the entrance in the shadow of an adjoining house, her eyes wandering from the carriage-door to the entrance, where the firemen were busy turning out some of the lights.

Presently what she waited for came.

The glass doors swung open and three or four gentlemen came out laughing and talking.

"Quite a success," said one.

"Yes, for all but Adrien. Pomfrey, you have netted something considerable?"

"Yes," answered the author, with quiet satisfaction. "It will run for a hundred nights."

"What a thing it is to be a popular dramatist!" sneered Mortimer.

"Better to be a popular and beautiful actress," whispered Paxhorn, as the door swung open again, and Adrien came out with Haidee upon his arm and Mr. Jasper Vermont following.

"All here?" said the sharp, clear voice of Adrien Leroy. "Drive to my chambers, Duke, Haidee will honour us to-night, and repeat the breakdown for your benefit. Pomfrey, send your cab home; you must sup with us—we want to hear the rustle of your laurels."

There was a clatter of horses' hoofs, a confusion of carriages drawing up, a woman's harsh, vulgar laugh rang out above the rust and then they were gone.

Suddenly, while the girl's eyes were strained after them, one of the carriages stopped and Mr. Jasper Vermont jumped out and hastened back to the theatre.

Reah waited for him to re-emerge, which after a few minutes he did, bearing a small roll in his hand, and so quietly that Reah did not hear him and stood right in his path.

With an oath he nearly stumbled over her—for he was looking at the papers—then pushing her aside roughly with his soft hand, said, harshly:

"Get out of the way, girl. I have nothing for you."

And he hurried on.

At the sound of his voice Reah's face whitened, and she drew back trembling and shaking.

So great an effect did it have upon her that she remained gazing after him long after the carriage had rolled from sight.

Then with a shudder she drew her shawl around her and moved away.

Before she had proceeded three steps her foot struck against something light and white.

She stooped, and picked up a small roll of paper, and carrying it to the gas-lamp saw that it was a portion of the roll which the gentleman had been looking at.

She could not read, so after a moment's glance of curiosity, she slipped it in her bosom and walked dreamily on.

(To be continued.)

SERGEANT BATES threatens us with another visitation of his flag. This time he proposes to travel

over the continent of Europe in company with two old soldiers of France and Germany, each carrying the emblem of his nationality on a pole.

#### A BREAKFAST IN LIMA.

THE Peruvians breakfast at eleven a.m., having had a cup of chocolate, tea or coffee, and a biscuit while in bed at six a.m. The dusky senoras and senoritas all dress in white, loose, flowing wrappers (children and all), if they are among the wealthier classes; and the female portion of the house leave their long, heavy black hair hanging in two loose plaits down the back, matrons as well as children. Then, if the sea-breeze be very cool, they come out in little crimson or blue saques over their white robes; and the breakfast begins with soup. Nothing can be more delicious than these native soups; one in particular, called chupe, made of a kind of crab (called camarona), like the English shrimp, but more delicious eating, and more resembling a lobster. These camaronas are boiled alive in new milk, to which is added rice, parsley, grated cheese, hard-boiled eggs, potatoes in halves, onions and bread-crumbs.

Then the fruit and melons are brought in—many, however, preferring the fresh figs, melons and bananas before the chupe. Then the fish, broiled or fried—a salt-water fish, boiled, called corbina, very much like our Spanish mackerel in flavour; and small fish fried, called pekelanais, like our freshwater perch, except not so long. And now come the substantial: Fried bananas with poached eggs; mutton chops, breaded; delicious beefsteak with fried potatoes around it, the dish containing only enough for one person; lettuce and radishes made into salad; ham and eggs; and always the native dish of aqueque, compounded of red peppers and potatoes, and so hot with Chili pepper that the tears start from your eyes as you swallow it. Then rice cakes and peccante, another fiery dish made of mustard, or a kind of curry and rice. Then comes coffee (never boiled, but condensed in French coffee-pots, and always clear as amber, and served in tiny Sevres China mugs, without milk or sugar unless you ask for them); truly a "nectar fit for the gods." Then cigars and claret come on, and the ladies light not only your cigars, but a cigarette for themselves, and you sit and chat at the table for half an hour.

Their manner of eating is not exactly like ours. They use knife quite as often as fork, and the fingers more than either. One of their peculiar customs at the table deserves especial mention. If there is a little delicacy on the plate—a bit of the breast of a fowl, a tender morsel of turkey, any little dainty that is inviting—it is a very delicate compliment to a person sitting next you at the table to take up this "moreau" in your thumb and finger, and place it in that person's mouth from your own fingers. I have often seen a young Peruvian gallant pick up a bit of chicken, or a small bit of game, and convey it with his fingers into the mouth of the leading belle, although his fingers may drip with gravy, or (if it be preserved fruit) the juices may run down his wrist. It is the most delicate compliment, and any one refusing the donor the eating of these finger bits would commit an unpardonable insult. There are no large dishes put upon the table—no platters, or meat served in large quantities. Every one at the table has a plate brought to him, and a plate set before him, and each course separately, and he may help himself to what he pleases.

T. F.

A MONSTER OF THE DEEP.—The latest arrival at Brighton is a monster "sea-devil!" It is residing at the aquarium. The fish is of a dusky-brown colour; tadpole-shaped, that is, all head and shoulders. It is about 5ft. in length, and some 8ft. across at the flappers. In its inanimate state the fair "proportions" of the fish are seen at a disadvantage. Seen, however, under any conditions, it would not be likely to gain the prize for beauty, for a more ugly customer it would be difficult to imagine. The mouth at once arrests attention. It stretches literally right across the creature's face, and when closed as much as it can be the under jaw protrudes somewhat—it measures nineteen inches! At the edge of each jaw are two or three rows of teeth, hard, strong and pointed, set like the prongs of a rat-trap, those of the lower jaw directed obliquely inward, and once interlocked upon prey, escape would be hopeless. It is, however, when open that the enormous capacity of the fish's mouth is apparent. If the fish chose to strain a point a four and a half gallon barrel might be got into it! It was caught at Hastings, and forwarded on to a more natural and suitable place of residence.

EXTINCT SCOTCH PEERAGES.—A curious return, just published, gives some particulars connected with the extinction of Scotch peerages since the union of Scotland with England. On the 1st of May, 1707, the number of peerages on the Union Roll of Scot-



land was 154, to which nine were afterwards added, between that date and August, 1873, giving a total of 163. Of these, 27 were forfeited by reason of attainder, but 13 of these attained peerages being subsequently restored, 149 were left on the roll. This number suffered serious diminution under the provisions of the statute 10 and 11 Victoria. Out of the 39 struck off by this cause, 32 are either dormant or extinct. Four out of the 39 have been absorbed in higher peerages, while three are still extant, although no vote has been received or counted in respect of them since the year 1800. One peerage, that of Lord Colvill of Ochiltree, is omitted from the roll called at elections by order of the House of Lords, dated the 22nd of May, 1848. These several reductions bring down the total number borne on the roll from 163 to 109, being a decrease of nearly 50 per cent.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN has been pleased to signify to Sir William Forbes her intention of presenting another silver cup to be competed for at the forthcoming Wapinschow. This is the sixth cup which Her Majesty has given to the Aberdeenshire Volunteer Artillery and Rifle Association.

NEW MONEY.—The authorities of the Mint are about to coin a large quantity of half-crowns, none of which have been made since 1849, when they were abolished by Royal proclamation, and all those then existing were as they got worn ordered to be called in and gradually converted into florins. The florin was coined in 1851 to operate as a counterpoise against the abolition of the half-crown and to form the basis of a contemplated decimal currency which it was at that period hoped would be universally acceptable. The commercial world, however, did not adopt very willingly the new theory of circulation, consequently it has been abandoned. Had it succeeded the Mint intended to establish a gold decimal currency. The reason for coining the new half-crowns is the expressed wish of a majority of the leading commercial and banking firms throughout the United Kingdom supporting its utility as a measure of currency.

TO LADIES ABOUT TO MARRY.—Woman cannot be too cautious, too watchful, too exacting in her choice of a lover, who, from the slave of a few weeks or months (rarely years) is to become the master of her future destiny, and the guide, not only through all time, but perhaps eternity. What madness then to suffer the heart to be taken captive by beauty, talent, grace, fascination, before the reason is convinced of the soundness of principle, the purity of faith, the integrity of mind of the future husband! It is not always the all-enduring, devoted and impassioned lover who makes the kindest, the most attentive and forbearing husband. We have often seen the coldest inattention, the most mortifying disparagement, the most insulting inconsistencies follow, even in the first months of matrimony, on the most romantic devotion and blindest adoration of courtship. The honeymoon seems to exhaust every drop of honey, and leave nothing but stings in the jar. Again, the lover who dares to be a man, and to "hint a fault, and hesitate dislike," even though the happiness of his whole life seems to him at stake—one who may forget a bouquet, or neglect a compliment, arrive a few minutes too late, or be disinclined for a walk or a polka, not admire a fashion, or disagree with a sentiment—such a lover, despicable and indifferent as he is pronounced by astounded mamma and indignant aunts (jealous for their daughters and nieces as for themselves) and far as he falls short of romantic sisters' and young friends' enacting notions, may turn out the best of good husbands after all. If he dared to be a man when he had everything to gain, he will not be a coward when he has, in the world's opinion, nothing to lose.

HEALTH AND HOUSE-HUNTING.—Many people select a house for a residence so carelessly, that it will be their last house on earth; it might not have been, had they remained where they were, or moved to one more eligible. It does not express the whole truth to say that some houses are unhealthy; it is nearer the fact in reference to many dwellings to say that they are deadly. Sometimes certain rooms in a house are so impregnated with poisonous emanations, that their occupants become ill in a few days. We know of a capacious mansion, which has in it a certain room, known to make the parties ill within a few days after they move into it. Within a year a man in perfect health was placed in a room in London, and in a few days died of putrid fever. The next, and the next, and the next occupant were noticed successively to become ill. It became so notorious, that the authorities took it in hand to examine the premises, and it was found that the man who papered the room, in order to fill up a cavity in the wall, put in a bucket full of paste and pieces of the glazed papering, which in time began to ferment and rot, throwing into the room a steady supply of the noxious fumes of decomposed lead, and other

hurtful ingredients employed in the sizing of wall-paper. It is known that the sizing on a visiting-card is enough to poison a child if put into its mouth; being a little sweetish to the taste, it is rather palatable. Another house became so notoriously unhealthy that the common people reported it to be haunted; it soon gained such a reputation that a body would live in it, free of rent. Investigation discovered that it was the result of pasting new paper on old.

HYDROPHOBIA.—At the meeting of the French Academy of Sciences, on April 13, M. Bouley laid before it a memoir by M. Bourrel, a veterinary surgeon, of Paris, entitled a "Complete Treatise on Rabies in the Dog and Cat, with a method of Preserving Oneself against it." The means of preserving from rabies, to make known and disseminate the knowledge of which is the principal aim of this memoir, consists in taking off the edge of the teeth of the dog by the aid of nippers and files. M. Bourrel had the daring to perform this operation of filing down the teeth on three dogs when they were in a condition of raging madness, notwithstanding the danger of inoculation he incurred both during the preliminaries and the different stages of the process. Six dogs kept for experiment were then delivered over to the mad animals, who prolegated themselves on them and bit them furiously, but without breaking the skin in any one of them. The dogs experimented on were watched during six months and madness did not show itself in any of the number. M. Bourrel, convinced that the blunted tooth-growth of the dog could not penetrate through clothing, gave his hand covered with a glove to one of the mad dogs. "When," he says, "the dog released it, the glove was intact, and the bite had only produced a deep impression. This experiment, repeated on dogs who were not mad, to which I gave my naked hand to bite, proved to me that the blunted tooth can but very rarely, however great may be the contraction of the muscles of the jaw, break the epidermis of animals, whose hair necessarily deadens the pressure exerted; and can only injure the human epidermis in exceptional cases."—*London Medical Record.*

## JOSEPHINE BEAUVILLIERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lady Juliette's Secret," "The Rose of Kemdale," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER XXI.

Her brow with tempest clouds was dark,  
Bright lightning shot from out her eyes,  
As o'er the lone, devoted bark,  
The vivid terrors roll on high.

Rogers.

As the days wore on, Josephine began to regard her intelligent and obliging companion with feelings of pity, curiosity, wonder and even kindness: that one thought of ever becoming his wife, she put away from her as too awful even to contemplate. She fondly hoped that the Lady Vengea, whose kindness and affection towards her seemed to increase daily, would never insist on forcing upon her a fate worse than death, and the little count for a while kept away alike from rhapsodies and burning love glances. He was ever docile, obedient to her lightest wish, highly amusing, very intelligent and excessively good tempered.

"He can never be so mad as to think of marrying anybody, unless it were a lady of his own size," thought Josephine to herself. "Lady Vengea wanted to frighten me, or put my obedience to the test, yet I do not expect her to make me her heiress. This visit will have been a pleasant one, and when I return home she will probably make me some handsome presents, for she is very generous. She will continue her bounty always towards poor papa—I make no doubt of that. But when I return to Northwick St. John's I will take up my business again of paper flower making. The people shall not say that I have grown proud or exalted on account of my visit."

Thus Josephine deluded herself, and the days passed on smoothly and agreeably, but there was one feature, one circumstance connected with her residence at Tempestclod which sometimes rather appalled Josephine when she ventured to consider it. This was, that she was to all intents and purposes a prisoner. She was never permitted to stir farther than the park walls of Tempestclod.

The park was very large; there was ample space for riding and driving, or wandering on foot through the thick woods, where the first green buds of April were putting forth their beauty, and the early song of the birds was beginning to be heard.

But whether she rode on her white palfrey or rambled through the spring woods searching for primroses, Josephine was always accompanied by the little count, and followed in the rear by two red-headed Russian men.

Instinct whispered to her, though she strove to stifle the whisper, that should she attempt to leave the grounds, she would be captured and brought back.

Meanwhile she had no wish to leave them—life at Tempestclod, that one terror excepted, was a pleasanter and more peaceful life than she had ever experienced before. She heard from her father now and then. His letters were always in the same strain, encouraging her to perfect trust in and obedience to the Lady Vengea.

The selfish father wrote more happily, he had more comforts now. Josephine sent him the greater part of the money she had received from the Lady Vengea. He expressed his gratitude, told her that the fortunes of his wife, himself and his hapless children were in her hands, and entreated Josephine not to replunge them into poverty by any act of disobedience.

Meanwhile, Mr. Beauvilliers never mentioned the name of the Count Potowski. Josephine tried to forget, and she partially succeeded.

It was one bright afternoon in April. Josephine had been out all the morning, and now she was preparing to change her dress for dinner. Griselda was brushing her beautiful golden hair. Josephine was leaning back a little luxuriously, a little idly, perhaps—she had been walking for miles in the pure air, and she was just a little fatigued.

Griselda had spread before her three beautiful dresses for her to choose which she would wear that day—a rich emerald-coloured satin, another a magnificent azure and a lovely pearl-gray silk, trimmed profusely with black lace.

Josephine hardly knew which to select. She was in a very calm and peaceful mood that afternoon. She was anticipating a very pleasant evening of reading, music and conversation. She had received a letter from her father that morning, and she was assured that all her relations were enjoying health and comparative prosperity.

Chatterbox she had not forgotten; but she told herself she was fast learning wisdom in regard to him, that she was growing calmer, that she devoted less time to retrospection and useless regret.

As she leaned back dreamily, almost blissfully, in the full enjoyment of perfect ease and physical health, while Griselda brushed out her golden hair, and the golden sun sank lower and lower in the west, the door of her dressing-room opened suddenly, and Lady Vengea rustled in, dressed in yellow satin, and with yellow topaz ornaments, surrounded with large pearls, adorning her withered throat and skinny arms and dangling from her cunning looking, little old ears. Her gray hair was dressed high and powdered and very imposing did the Lady Vengea look, very imposing and almost handsome, despite her sixty and odd years and her wrinkled, eager, anxious face.

"Well, my love," cried Lady Vengea, "are you almost ready for dinner? We shall not dine for an hour yet it is true;"—looking at her large, old-fashioned gold watch, "but I want to speak to you for a quarter of an hour, so make haste, my love, and come to me soon."

Then the Lady Vengea, yellow satin, yellow topazes and all, swept out of the room, and Josephine hurried with her dressing.

She chose the pearl-gray silk, and wore with it the emeralds which Lady Vengea had given to her. Then she sought her benefactress.

She found the lady in her boudoir, seated before a bright fire. An inlaid table was drawn close to her side, and this table was strewn over with papers, law papers apparently.

"Sit down, child," said Lady Vengea, pointing to a seat.

And accordingly Josephine sat down.

"My lawyer is coming to-morrow," said Lady Vengea, "and I wish to have this matter settled promptly. Of course you are to be my heiress. The count is a very rich man, and he is generosity itself in his settlements for your benefit, but I want to hear just once from your own lips that you do not mean to give me any trouble by childish qualms at the last, and that you will be ready to marry Potowski on the fifteenth of May."

Josephine was as white as marble. She grasped at the little table with both her hands, her breath came in short, panting sobs.

"Lady Vengea," she said, "I cannot—that is, the count has never asked me to marry him."

Lady Vengea broke into a short, scornful laugh. "Because," she said, "you have never encouraged him. He is half heart-broken; he has told me all about it. You will have to dismiss all this folly, Josephine. You have given the count every reason to believe that you like him, and now, if you turn against him, beware! He comes of a stock which never forgets or forgives an injury."

"But you said that I never encouraged him just



[A DISCOVERY.]

now," faltered Josephine. "He must know that I—I never can marry him."

Lady Vengea stamped her foot, the flames of Tophet seemed to flash out of her eyes.

"How can I have given him reason to believe that I love him, and yet have never encouraged him?" demanded Josephine, wildly.

She had shrunk away from the Lady Vengea as she spoke, for there was something in her looks which terrified her.

"What! are you growing rebellious? Are you defying me?" demanded Lady Vengea. "I set my heart first on your marrying yonder drawing-room soldier, Chatteris; but he—he threw you up, he cast you from him, and now I would never forgive him—no, not if he lay on the ground at my feet for a year. And, secondly, I have set my heart on your marrying this noble Russian gentleman, whose wealth far exceeds yonder little estate of Merton Court, and who loves you so he would dieten thousand deaths for your sake. And now you—you refuse! A beggarly young artizan whom I picked as it were out of the streets! You were beautiful and innocent—your life was pure, laborious and self-sacrificing; but how bereft of all earthly joys. What scanty clothing, what insufficient diet, how poor and comfortless was your clean, cold, virtuous little home! How often did you dine on anything better than a morsel of salt herring, a slice of dried toast and a cup of weak tea? How hard was your little bed, how you must have shivered under your clean, thin blankets. Was a good fire ever kept up until your selfish papa, after breakfasting in bed, came into the parlour after one o'clock to lounge on the sofa, and to read the paper? How you trudged out in all weathers to your pupils—how your boots let in the water, and what a wonder it was that you did not die long ago of sore throat or inflammation on the chest. All these must be facts patent to your memory. I have dowered you with gifts. I have lodged, clothed and fed you as a princess. I have sent money to your selfish father. I have named you as my heiress. I have affianced you to a wealthy, intellectual, accomplished man of noble birth—and this is how you requite me! This is enough to rouse the blood of a saint—and I—I am not a saint—oh, no! I am not a saint!"

And Lady Vengea began to pace up and down the long room, taking enormous strides. At last she stopped before Josephine.

"Have you made up your mind?" she said.

Under the outward gentleness of Josephine there existed a spirit of heroism strong and unconquerable.

Looking up into the eyes of Lady Vengea, she said:

"Yes, your ladyship, I have made up my

mind. I will prefer to return home, to labour and to poverty, to that life of toil and privation from which your bounty rescued me. That life has no terrors for me. It is only on my father's account that I regret this change from luxury to hardship. But I should be committing a terrible sin did I stand before the altar, and there swear to love, honour and obey a person for whom I entertain no other feeling than a species of pity, mingled with a sentiment which amounts almost, in spite of myself, to loathing. Lady Vengea, I could never marry a person afflicted like the count. It is not only the ridicule of the world which I fear. I should lose all self-respect—nay, I should lose my reason—were such a husband imposed on me."

Lady Vengea approached Josephine, drew a chair close in front of her, seated herself, and bent forward, leaning her elbows on her knees, and resting her chin in the palms of her hands. By this means her cruel, angry face, with its flashing black eyes, was brought to within a few inches of the fair, pale face of Josephine.

"So you defy me," she hissed out, "so you defy me. But I am stronger than you, my will is stronger. I have power, and you have none. Unless you become the wife of Count Potowski you never leave these walls alive."

"Madam," cried Josephine, looking at Lady Vengea with a species of heroic diadain, "madam, it seems to me that you make light of murder."

"For me there is no such word," responded the terrible Lady Vengea. "If a life is in my way, in my way when I have planned the good of others—for I never toil for myself—I sacrifice it as remorselessly as I would the existence of a stinging insect. Those who disobey me I punish with death. I live above the ridiculous laws of this country. My despotism is absolute, for I hold the lives of men in my hand. I am gifted with power of which you have no idea. Poor, weak mortal, I have but to pronounce a ban upon you, and you will fade away; die and wither like a leaf in autumn, drop to the earth like a crushed rose. Choose, then, choose, between death and Count Potowski."

"Death!" answered Josephine, with a faint smile. "My choice is soon made, Lady Vengea."

An expression of diabolical fury transformed the countenance of Lady Vengea with its flashing black eyes, its deep wrinkles and its cruel mouth, into the face of a fiend.

"But I will add tortures," she cried, "you will not have an easy death, Mademoiselle Josephine."

"Madam, your wickedness shall not frighten me," replied heroic Josephine. "My trust is in a higher

power. If the power of demons, Lady Vengea, is higher than the power of men, there is this advantage, that the power of Heaven is greater than the power of demons."

Lady Vengea turned pale, pushed back her chair, covered her face with her hands. Something in the words of Josephine had appalled or startled this woman. Demoniac though she might be in her rages, she was not always utterly evil. There was generosity, compassion and admiration for noble qualities in the Lady Vengea. At times she was a fiend, but there were other times when she seemed almost like a good genius.

She turned suddenly round, and, behold! all the wickedness seemed to have faded out of her face.

"Josephine, my child," she said, "I will give you a whole week to consider the proposition which I have made to you, and during that time I shall never allude to the subject again. Meanwhile, make yourself as contented as you can, enjoy all that Tempest-cloud offers to you; only remember that I am firm in what I have said, my resolution is unalterable."

Josephine rose, bowed, and hastily left the room. Down in the gorgeous drawing-room of blue satin and gold she found the little count standing before a splendid fire, warming his pigmy hands.

The large French windows were open on the lawn, where spring flowers were blooming in the red light of the setting sun.

Josephine had formed her resolution. She resolved to throw herself upon the generosity of the Count Potowski.

He turned round as she entered, and advanced to meet her.

"Count Potowski," began Josephine, "I am so much agitated by what has passed that I do not know how to approach the subject in any other way than by going to the point at once. Count Potowski, Lady Vengea has resolved that I am to marry you."

Here Josephine's heart beat so fast that she could not speak. She was pale as death, she almost staggered to a seat.

The little count threw himself upon his knees at her feet. His face, which would have been large for a tall and stout man, seemed to grow broader and redder under the excitement of the moment. Looking into his deeply set and burning eyes, marking the expression of his coarse and sensual mouth, then looking upon his broad brow where reigned benevolence and other noble qualities, Josephine wondered whether she had more to hope or to fear from the passionate love of the little Russian dwarf.

(To be continued.)





[A SISTER'S SACRIFICE.]

## THE LITTLE PRINCESS.

## CHAPTER IV.

Howe'er it be it seems to me  
 'Tis only noble to be good;  
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
 And simple faith than Norman blood.

Tennyson.

DESPITE the meagre furniture and cheerless walls, the old room in Poplar Court put on a Christmas brightness.

Said Florence:

"I am determined to call our chicken a turkey, gran'pa, for the sake of old times. Oh! I remember—"

Suddenly she clasped a hand over her mouth, stood breathless a moment, till the old man asked:

"Well, little one, what does 'ee remember?"

"Nothing, gran'pa—that is—you see—I think I've forgotten. It doesn't do me any good to, you know—to talk about things past and gone; you've told me so yourself, and—"

She had fixed her teeth, a look of quick passion darkened all the face that the poor, old, sightless eyes could not see—and the little clenched hands aimed impotent blows at the air; then she sank crouching on the floor, with a sudden, bitter burst of tears.

"What's 'ee doing now, dear?" asked the old fiddler, suspiciously.

"I—I'm seeing to the potatoes," said the child, rising to her feet, controlling her voice with admirable firmness, and plunging the fork into the sauce-pan.

"We haven't got any dishes, scarcely," said the old man.

"I know—but I have managed," returned Flor.

"Next door lent me a dish or two, as she was going out at Christmas, and the little hunchback let me have two cups and saucers. They heard some one say that we were going to keep Christmas, I suspect."

Mitty came up in due time with the "turkey," and a fine, plump little "turkey" it was, to be sure. Flor hovered round it admiringly.

"How nicely it's done! and, oh, dear! how brown and beautiful it is; and how large for a chick—I mean a turkey that is a small one," she added, laughingly.

Mitty Morgan, a short, fat, but good-natured looking woman, who boasted of having seen better times, was Flor's best friend in Poplar Court. She it was who, when sober, crawled up into Flor's room after the old fiddler was asleep, and told her store of fairy stories occasionally suiting the circumstances

to present time and place, and Flor had grown very fond of her.

"So you didn't go to the lady this morning," she said, as she sat back surveying the white bones of the victim she had slayed, cooked and eaten.

"Oh, yes, I did," said Flor, "but I was late. I didn't like to seem in a hurry, and so the time slipped by. When I went up the girl told me Mrs. Walters was gone to church, and had taken my dear Little Red Riding-Hood; that she had something nice for me, but had forgotten, and carried the key of her bedroom with her. But she told me to come again, and so I promised to go this afternoon. I don't care for what she'll give me," Flor said again, in her pretty, spirited way; "but it will be delightful to see them both together—my beautiful lady and my darling Little Red Riding-Hood."

"Let me see, deary, isn't there anything nice I can lend you to wear?" queried Mitty Morgan, looking round distressfully. "Ah, if we were only made of gold!"

"And you could clip a piece off," laughed Flor, "every time you wanted to, and it would grow again!"

"My darling, hand this to the little girl and tell her it is something mamma and little Florence bought for her."

Florence had not taken her eyes from the lovely child since she had seated herself at Mrs. Walter's request. Now she started and flushed and her lip quivered.

"What is the matter with you, my dear?" the lady asked again, noticing a new and singular expression in the face of the child.

"To hear you call her what once my papa called me," cried Flor, the tears starting.

"Why! is your name Florence?"

"They call me Flor," said the child, coldly, remembering her vow, and with a resolute effort driving back her tears.

The reply seemed to enlist still more the sympathy of the lady, and her accents were still softer as she said:

"I had a sister named Florence, and that was my mother's name, too. Won't you tell me something about yourself? Is your mother dead? Are both your parents dead? I have thought that perhaps that old man was not related to you, I don't know why."

Flor looked down and was silent; struggling, how hard Heaven only knew, to keep her vow—the promise that seemed so binding and so awful. If she could only tell this sweet, kind heart her sad story!

But then if she had this little romance of her life would have stopped here.

"You have nothing to tell, my dear?"

Flor shook her head.

"Poor thing!" thought Mrs. Walters. "Her story, likely enough, would be one of misery, exposure, perhaps of sin. Better for us both that she keep silent."

"Well, my dear, you shall take your time about telling me. If ever you feel like it, remember that I am your friend. I have always liked you because of your habitual neatness. Poorly as you have been dressed, your little hands have been clean and white, and your pretty hair always smooth. I have but little money to give, though I live in this great house; but I have time, which is more valuable, sometimes, than money, and a great deal of patience. Before Christmas, I said to myself, that I wished to benefit some one, and Heaven put you in my mind. I had some thought of asking you to come and take care of Pet."

At this the little one smiled. The tears came again in Flor's eyes.

"Oh, it would be beautiful," she cried. "Oh, I should like it so much—but gran'pa—"

Her voice died away.

"Do you support him, child?"

"Oh, I could do nothing but for his beautiful music! My tambourine only helps a little; but he is blind, and I have taken care of him since—ever since—he—saved me—from—drowning."

"And he blind, child? is it possible? How did he save you?"

"Please, I'd rather not tell," gasped Flor.

This trial was almost too much for her.

"Never mind," said the gentle lady, "some other time, perhaps. Well, here are some strong, warm clothes; a little hood that will keep your head warm, and a waterproof cape that will prevent the rain from soaking in."

"Oh, thank you! thank you!" cried Flor, with brilliant eyes. She longed to get away somewhere, and have a long, childish cry. It seemed as if in no other way could she express her delight. "How good you are!" she said again, with quivering lips.

Something in the expression of the child's face touched Mrs. Walters, who bent down and kissed the white forehead.

"And I suppose you don't go to school?" she said, keeping the tears from her own eyes.

Flor shook her head.

"Gran'pa wanted me to, but who would take care of him? He is too old to leave so long. But I can read all the papers, and I can even write a little."

When I was a very little girl, I could write my own name."

"If you could spare an hour to come here every day," said Mrs. Walters, "I would teach you to write and some other things. I can give you books too."

"Oh, how good you are!" Flor exclaimed again, chokingly.

"Do you think you can?"

"Oh, I must! yes, I know I can. Gran'pa will be so glad!"

"Very well, we'll fix upon the hour some time. You may go now, for I am getting my little Florence ready for a party to which she is going. I think Flor is too little, but Mrs. Beaehman would not take no for an answer."

"Is it there?" cried Flor.

"Why?" cried Mrs. Walters, glancing up surprisedly.

"Because gran'pa is going to play, and I'm to go to take care of him," cried Flor, rapturously.

"Well—indeed—then the new clothes will come quite in play. You have never seen a children's party, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Flor, eagerly; "I had one myself when—papa—". She stopped, confused and frightened. "I forgot," she said, firmly, looking up in a piteous, appealing manner to the bright face above her; "I must never speak of that."

"Of what, my dear?"

Flor only shook her head, and retreated towards the door.

Mrs. Walters thought it some childish freak, or point of honour, and forbore, with true womanly delicacy, to question her farther.

So Flor went home with her clothes, that grandpa tried his best to see, through her tongue, and Mitty Morgan came up to dress her, adding here and there a pretty bow of blue ribbon, which she said she had saved from those better times.

"I always knew, my dear, that some good fairy would take pity upon you, and make you a little princess at last, a real princess."

"Not the ragged princess of Poplar Court?" cried Flor. "But they can't call me the ragged princess any longer now, can they?" and she looked herself over admiringly.

"Only when you get your fortune that the good fairy is going to give you, you must not forget me," said Mitty, kissing her.

"Oh, never!" cried Flor, fervently.

What a scene of enchantment for the poor child! She sat in a pretty little alcove with the old fiddler, keeping time with her tambourine, her eyes fastened upon the throng of bright and happy children, decked in holiday attire. Mrs. Walters came and spoke to her at refreshment time, and that made her supremely happy; but the crowning joy was to hold Little Red-Riding Hood, who had fallen fast asleep in her arms, while her beautiful lady went upstairs for her shawl and hood, and as little Flor begged to carry the child to the door, it was allowed, and unseen, she imprinted a kiss upon the angelic forehead.

When she was gone, Flor felt no sympathy with the gay scene, and she was glad when at an early hour the party broke up, and she led the old blind fiddler home again.

#### CHAPTER V.

Oh, what may man within him hide,  
Though angel on the outward side.

*Shakespeare.*

THE Widow Collins opened the pretty little cottage next to the Wyllies Estate, as the great house had been called in former years, but which the present proprietor, who had a fondness for musical names, had christened Willoway. An avenue of beautiful willows extended from the wood to the porch on the west front, so that the name seemed appropriate.

The little cottage was a very pretty set-off to the larger and more pretentious mansion, it was kept so beautifully neat. The old lawyer had spent a great deal of money in ornamenting the grounds, and placing here and there an unpretending piece of statuary, or a mimic arbour, or a little grotto of shells. That, and the aid her only son afforded her from an ample salary, supported her in comfort, and provided also for the little wants of the two sisters, Angy and Mary Collins. Mary was now visiting some relatives—the brother never came there, save fortnightly on Saturday night; and there were few visitors presented themselves at Eden Lodge, as Angy laughingly called it.

"You see, Mr. Irvington, it is built just where the lodge ought to be," she said, laughingly, to John Irvington, who had just dropped in one evening; "and a house like yours needs just such an appendage."

"It needs two or three appendages," said John, meaningly, and then thought how perfectly the face resembled the one conjured up by the old woman's incantations.

It was a pretty, winsome face, and Angy was not at all unware of her attractions. She glanced up with an arch smile, and down again with a conscious blush, for she read that in the man's eyes she did not care to see.

She had known him now for two months.

Sometimes he came over to bring her a few choice flowers, sometimes to bring a book, or borrow one from her father's library, which still maintained its old place in Eden Lodge, sometimes to proffer a present of fine fruit—and by the widow, who hoped with all her heart that Angy would fancy this rich young man, was always received with a warm welcome.

One evening he looked in at the door, catching sight of the widow's black robes and a portion of Angy's white dress.

"May I come in?" he asked, laughingly. "I'm so lonesome as Willoway."

"Certainly," said the widow, but there seemed to be an indelision in her voice, perhaps a regret.

He entered; Angy had risen in some confusion from a seat very near that of a tall, slender, dark-eyed man, and was coming forward.

"I beg pardon—introduce!" exclaimed John Irvington, a shadow clouding his face for a moment.

"Oh, no, Mr. Irvington!" said Angy, her woman's tact covering all embarrassment. "I'm very glad you came; we were just wishing some friend would come in, wasn't we, Seymour? This is Mr. Seymour Hurst—Mr. John Irvington."

"Oh, we're very glad indeed!" ascended the widow, quite at her ease, as the two young men shook hands with great apparent cordiality. "For my son sent us some excellent oysters by Mr. Hurst, and, as Angy says, we were wishing a friend would drop in. I think you must have been impressed," she continued, laughingly.

"I was," John answered, in a graver manner than usual. "It's very odd, but I had some prime oysters sent out to-day, and my new cook spoiled them in the cooking. I threw them all away."

"Then you shall have an opportunity of judging of my skill in the culinary department," said the widow.

"I never allow any one to touch oysters over the fire but myself, and I'm going out to superintend this minute. It's nine now; ten will be time enough, I suppose. Meanwhile, Angy, entertain the gentlemen till I return with something more substantial."

"Well, I for one shall not object to my keeper, what say you, Mr. Irvington?"

There was something John did not like in the tone of this young man; a sort of proprietor's interest, a familiarity that was intensely disagreeable to him. The pleasantly saturnine look, too, he acknowledged was something to fascinate and control. The dark eyes so full of power, massive brow shaded by heavy, curling locks of black hair, the flexible lips, pointed chin and aquiline nose, the ever-varying, sparkling expression of the whole countenance making it a fascinating study. Then and there he took an unconquerable dislike to Seymour Hurst; and his dislike culminated before the pleasant little supper came on. To be sure Mr. Hurst was properly appreciative of the proprieties. He called Angy miss, was fastidiously polite in his attentions, but for all that Mr. Irvington chose to see strong grounds for jealousy in everything he did. It was hardly to be wondered at, since young Hurst wore his superiority with a modest grace that did him credit. Handsome as John Irvington undoubtedly was, one would scarcely look in his face a second time in the presence of Seymour Hurst. John Irvington was jealous at first sight, but it was hard work to control his feelings during the whole of that memorable evening. The little cottage piano had never given forth such melodious tones as when it vibrated under the touch of genius, while Seymour Hurst sat before it. His voice, too, how rich and expressive! There was little doubt but that he loved Angy Collins—there was no doubt at all when John Irvington heard him sing.

And she—did she love this poor lawyer—this genius working under difficulties and struggling for a competence? Her eye fell before his, but that was sometimes the case when John Irvington addressed her. Angy was a bit of a coquette, though she would never have acknowledged it. It was very natural, poor child. She could no more help trying to make herself agreeable than she could help living. She liked to entertain and to please. Perhaps her love of approbation was too largely developed.

But in the treatment of this young student there was a deference, a frankness and gentle timidity, that to see and admit was gall and wormwood to impetuous, proud John Irvington. And that night, of all others, Seymour exerted himself. He had heard of this attractive, moneyed man, this man who could live in the midst of splendour and so shine and dazzle—but not out of the luxury and greatness of

his own nature, and he was not going to be thrown into the shade by a man who was merely a millionaire, and presumed upon his wealth. He had, too, a lurking fear that the girl he loved might be lured by this false glitter, and he wished to set before her in startling contrast the merits of the two men.

"I'm hoarse," he said, rising from the instrument and sauntering toward the centre-table filled with albums and books in expensive bindings. "Mr. Irvington will entertain you now; you play, do you not?"

"I am sorry to say I know nothing about it," said John, affecting to examine a picture in the volume he had lifted up, making a feint to read now and then, but in reality watching Angy. "I might have learned, I suppose, but the fact is, there are so many poor musicians, that it seems a pity to interfere with their chances of earning an honest living."

"I don't see what that has to do with a man's cultivation of his tastes," said Seymour.

"Oh, when I want music I pay for it," said Irvington, settling himself back in his chair.

"What a vulgar dog!" thought Seymour to himself, and his cheek grew hot. But he was too thoroughly a gentleman to take offence at the implied superiority. "That's a fine group of statuary," he said, a moment after, as Irvington continued indolently to turn the pages.

"I think I must get that," John responded.

"The sculptor made me a present of this yesterday," continued Seymour, turning to Angy. "He had but two, and it will be months before any others are out."

"Then you know him?" asked John Irvington.

"He married my sister," was the reply; "and I am happy to say his genius brings him in a great deal of money," he added, quietly.

"What a glorious thing it is to possess genius!" cried Angy, with a burst of young-lady enthusiasm.

"Do you really think so?" queried Seymour Hurst.

"Indeed I do. I would give all the world if I were a genius."

"Or the wife of one," laughed John, concealing his burning jealousy.

"No, I didn't say that," protested Angy, but at that moment her eyes met the luminous orbs of Seymour Hurst fastened upon her.

A burning blush suffused her cheeks, at the same time a new and beautiful expression gave new animation to her countenance.

"She loves him—she loves him!" repeated John Irvington to himself, savagely; "but—it was her face, and no other, that I saw at Breslau. She shall be mine!"

Just then they were invited into a pleasant little dining-room, and sat down to a table charmingly arranged.

The oysters were excellent, and received their due meed of praise.

After supper Seymour started for home; and John Irvington walked with him to the road.

#### CHAPTER VI.

The whiteness in thy cheek  
Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.

*Shakespeare.*

It was a warm night, and the rich man did not care to enter his palace. Of late he had not rested well. In spite of his will, he invariably awakened at midnight, and the voice he had heard in his dream seemed to follow him.

"I tell you, man, I will haunt you to death."

He never slept without a light in his room, and if by any chance it went out, he lay trembling there like a guilty coward, till sometimes it would have been a positive relief, if he could have seen some solemn shape gliding across the room. But though he saw it not, all the logic he could bring to bear failed to convince him at times that the spirit was not there.

It was said in former times when a family moved in, some member or members of it were carried out dead before six months had elapsed. Now, John had sworn to himself that he would prove the fallacy of this superstition by bringing a bride over the threshold before the expiration of that time; and he was bound to fulfil his oath, because of the face the old woman had shown him in that old foreign town.

To-night he did not care to go in, for he was by no means happy. The bright eyes and face so full of power of Seymour Hurst had made him very uneasy.

"Pshaw!" he soliloquized, "it will be years before he is able to take care of a wife. In the meantime there is a chance for me; and I'll improve it. I don't know why I should be jealous of this fellow, but his manner hurt me confoundingly. How bright the moon is!" he continued, looking cautiously over his shoulder, and up and down the road. "And there's the whistle. Nobody'll stop here to-night, of course."

The trees threw fantastic shadows, which he tried to avoid—he always avoided shadows and darkness



if it was possible. A secret, subtle influence seemed to him ever lurking in both, and his conscience made him cowardly. Not that he thought often of the ragged child whose tears and prayers had left him hard as adamant. It was not the living he feared, but the dead. The awful dream had seemed so real to him.

Suddenly he drew back. A figure exactly like that of Seymour Hurst came rapidly across the road, with head bent low and almost buried in his breast. He had a carpet-bag in his hand, took long strides, and looked neither to the right or left as he passed John Irvington, of course without seeing him.

"That's very strange," said the latter, half aloud. "Can it be that fellow back again, in the dead of the night, making straight for Eden Lodge, too? What does it mean? An elopement, or anything of that sort, I wonder? I must see to this," and he hurried after him.

Yes, the man went in, without shutting the gate after him, and seemed to find no difficulty in entering the house. He had a latch-key, then.

Carefully John Irvington stepped upon the porch, and stood behind one of the slender pillars, where he could be quite hidden, if he chose, by the vines that grew around it.

For a brief time there was utter silence. Presently he heard some one call out again and again.

Then there was a stir above; the room was lighted, so that the beams fell far out upon the garden paling. Then there were steps down the stairs and a great cry—a woman's cry.

The shutters only were closed, so that John Irvington could not help hearing distinctly.

"Harry! what is the matter? Are you ill? You're white as a ghost! Mother, make haste, it is Harry."

"Come in here, Angy. Are there any folks visiting here?" asked the man.

"No—but what is it, Hal? You have some terrible, terrible tidings, I read it in your face."

"Nothing; only—for Heaven's sake, don't look at me so!—only—without help, I'm a ruined man, that's all."

He spoke with an effort, and panting like a wild animal run down by its pursuers.

There was no answer for a moment, then, with something like a moan, Angy called her mother to come quick. The widow was very much alarmed, and ran hurriedly at this last call.

"Harry, my son! what is it that agitates you so?" cried the mother, almost in tears.

"I am ruined, mother! I have lost myself eternally—I have ruined your good name with my own."

There was a terrible silence.

"I have forged a paper to the amount of two thousand pounds. The man who lured me to this villainy and whom I trusted has escaped, and in forty-eight hours it will be known—and they will be after me. Oh, idiot that I was!"

"Hal, this is awful!" exclaimed the widow, in an altered voice; "this is awful! We couldn't raise five hundred on the house, mortgaged as it is. Oh, it must be some hideous dream! I am not awake. Great Heaven! my boy that I brought up with such care."

"I know it, mother, I know it," groaned the miserable culprit. "I don't expect any pity or sympathy from you, Angy, or anybody. If I only could get off. Great Heaven! it is my first sin, will nobody help me?"

"Who can? who will? Whom could we expect to help us?" cried the mother, bitterly.

"Surely whom? then ruin must come, but I swear I will kill myself rather than meet it."

This was followed by a stifled scream from mother and sister.

"Oh, what shall we do?" moaned Angy. "Who would help us? Mother"—there was another short silence—"Mr. Irvington!"

John Irvington's heart throbbed wildly. He saw his way out of the mist he had been creating for himself.

"He is only a friend, Angy. How could we tell him the miserable truth, even if—"

"I would ask him," cried the unhappy man, "even on my knees, if only to save you from humiliation—but would he pity me? would he listen to me? These rich men have no pity for the poor and miserable. Shall I go to him to-night—go to the man I have never seen but once? What shall I plead to him for—in whose name? Heavens! I shall go mad!"

John Irvington's brain was not idle as he stood there—always ready to start back into deeper shadow.

"How could you—how could you, Harry?" wailed his mother.

"Don't ask me that; I've nearly gone crazy ask-

ing myself such questions. The fiend tempted me, I suppose. I thought the way was clear to make a fortune. I allowed myself to hope that I could give you and the girls a princely home. My head has been full of such schemes for the past two years, and here is the end of it—a gaol in prospect."

"You say it will be known—"

"In forty-eight hours. If to-morrow I should find some one to help me out! But the thought is folly—who would pay a thousand pounds for me?"

"I would willingly, if it beggared me," sobbed his mother, "for the sake of your father's honoured name."

"Don't—don't!" cried the young man, in anguish. "Harry, we must think it over," said Angy. "Go to bed now and we will contrive some plan. I will ask Mr. Irvington myself—he can but refuse me; and then if disgrace comes we will bear it. Come—come upstairs now."

"Oh, Angy, I can't rest—I shall die! If I had only foreseen the consequences! Idiot, miserable idiot!"

John Irvington stepped softly from the portico; the moon was in shadow now; presently it came out, disclosing his face, on which sat a smile of triumph as he said exultingly to himself:

"I'll make that old woman's prediction come true."

He slept only by snatches that night. The shadow seemed closer than ever. He trembled, partly with exultation, partly with fear. He was very near the goal that had seemed so far away a few short hours before; he held the price of a man's life in his hand—the anguish of a woman's heart. His conscience never troubled him, only through personal cowardice.

Not to be found out, was his aim—the grovelling instinct of an animal's nature. As for pure and holy love, he did not know what it meant, this handsome, this fashionable, this rich man, who had schemed and plotted so often under those silken canopies.

"A fair chance before me now, and won't lose it," he muttered to himself, shifting his head on his uneasy pillow. "A thousand, what's a thousand to me? But I must have my price—bargain for bargain."

He looked from the window—for he had only to touch a silken tassel, and the light blinds slipped asunder. All the beauty of yesterday seemed blotted out. He had come home in a fair moonlight; a dreary, misty rain obscured the landscape. The trees blinked through the thick folds of a curtain of fog; the window panes streamed with fine, almost impalpable channels, the sky was heavy with clouds.

"Just the day!" he thought, exultingly, "just the day to catch my bird; and having once caught it, transfer to its cage will take place in a remarkably short time. The less thought, the less regrets that slip between now and then, the better for both. I think I'll devise an errand that will take me to the Lodge early. They will never suspect."

Angy had not slept at all; her mother's grief was continuous, though not violent. The weary, sobbing sigh, the half-whispered prayer, were often heard by the poor girl, who had wept herself almost ill. Towards morning her mother fell asleep. Angy arose quietly, and, an unuttered fear at her heart, crept softly into the room where her brother had retired. It was his room, and bore unmistakable masculine evidence of the fact. Guns, pistol-cases, fishing-rods, a pair of antlers he had bought of an old farmer when a boy, a few sporting pictures, a camp-bed and a great display of trunks and boxes met the eye in every direction.

Pale and heavy-lidded, Harry looked at first so corpse-like that his sister darted toward the bed, suppressing a scream with difficulty. He slept, however, the silent sleep of exhaustion. But for the line of anguish that darkened his brow, his face wore a childlike innocence of repose, and Angy, who had transferred the almost idolatrous love she had felt for her father to this only brother, wrung her hands in mute sorrow as she thought of the revelations of the last few hours.

"Poor boy! he was tempted," was her low, tremulous exclamation. "He never would have done it, but for some bad influence, never. Heaven help him! Heaven help us all!"

She went downstairs.

Betty, the simple old woman, who was their right hand in household matters, was just stirring, and Angy wandered disconsolately from room to room.

How changed the day! how changed the circumstances! their very lives seemed to have gone forward at one bound into some gray and desolate valley. The light seemed to have faded from her eyes and the gloss from her tresses, and yet her sorrow became her.

The flowers so tastefully arranged by Seymour Hurst lay huddled together; had some malign influence wilted them?

"Heaven bless us!" cried old Betty, as she looked into the parlour. "Why, you're down early, child,

though to be sure this dark weather makes it seem earlier. I saw Mr. Irvington come over with something swinging in his hands, and was going to the door—Why! Heaven bless us!" for Angy had started and turned so deadly white that even Betty's blurred old eyes detected something wrong.

"Oh, there he is now!" cried the girl, in a voice of anguish, as the bell rang. "Oh, Betty! what shall I do?"

Betty stood still, staring and bewildered.

"Don't let him ring again, Betty—oh!—stop! let me think one moment. What shall I do? If I could only be firm! only keep calm! Betty, just say to Mr. Irvington—that—I would like to see him a few minutes in—the library—Betty. Perhaps my father's spirit may be there," she moaned, "to help me to plead for my poor erring brother. But how can I meet him? How can I tell him of this—this terrible disgrace? I must—it is better for me than poor mother—Harry was her idol—Heaven forgive him! Oh, he is coming! and what shall I do with these tears?"

Yes, he was there, even at the door. Perhaps nothing could have pleaded for the poor girl so eloquently as her attitude at that moment; her head, her whole form drooping in the sorrowful grace of sincere grief, her pretty face half turned away; a crimson spot on either cheek contrasting with the dead white pallor, her white hands resting on the dark marble of the table before her.

"Miss Angy—I fear you are certainly ill—or—something has befallen you."

She dared not look up, she could not, if the effort had been to save her life, at that moment.

John Irvington watched the curve of the beautiful throat, the outlines of the symmetrical figure, and the face whose counterpart he had seen at Breslau.

"Mr. Irvington—we are in trouble," said Angy, falteringly; "we—that is, I— and here her voice failed again, her lips quivered.

"Do not doubt that I will aid you, Miss Collins, to the full extent of my power; trust in me."

"Oh, you are good! you are generous, but you do not know—"

Did he not know?

The fiend saw the sarcastic smile which he hid from mortal eyes.

"You will not thank me for drawing on your sympathy—for detaining you so long," said Angy, now lifting her slight figure and trying to face him steadily, but yet failing. "I might as well come to the point at once, though it covers me with shame. Mr. Irvington, will you please close the door?"

He obeyed her.

"My brother has been lured by wicked companions to do a terrible thing," she resumed. "You will hardly credit me when I say he has forged a paper to the amount of a thousand pounds, and we are too poor to help him."

Her face was now one crimson from lip to brow; the red tide crept over her throat, and even the hands, that were suddenly lifted to the shame-painted face, were covered with the same sanguine tinge.

"Is that all, Miss Angy?"

Oh, Heaven! could he speak in that light way—what did it mean?

She let her hands fall, and lifted her eyes to his face, distressfully.

He came forward, almost smiling.

"Miss Angy," he said again, "is that all? Be sure I have the will to aid you, if you will give me the power."

"I—give you the power?" she murmured.

"Even you. Can you guess what I came for last night? and what I felt when I saw you so—shall I say, pleasantly occupied? I will say now what I could not then, for lack of opportunity. I love you, Angy Collins. Be my wife, and thus give me the power to help your brother out of this, or any other difficulty."

This was so sudden a revelation, that it struck through and through the sensitive heart, on which it fell, knell-like.

"But, Angy, you must be my wife."

The subtle decision expressed in the repetition revolted her. For a moment she felt like collecting all the force of her nature for a vigorous resistance, but she remembered her broken-hearted mother upstairs, the guilty but still beloved brother. There came upon her with terrific distinctness the words he had said, that he would not live to bear the disgrace or the punishment. She knew he would not, and could she live to feel that but for her he might have reformed and been respected, instead of filling—horrible thought!—a suicide's grave? It seemed as if all feeling was struck dead in her heart; even the love she felt for Seymour Hurst, who had been her playmate when a child, and her companion until her father's death.

Did hours pass, while she stood there, feeling so cold, stern and dumb? She never knew; but what

time passed took from her all the dew and freshness of her youth. She grew old in the presence of the man whose longing for her was so arbitrary.

"No other condition—none?" she murmured. "This is so unexpected."

And he answered:

"No other."

"Then—" she held out her hand mutely; her face grew white, the colour forsook her lips.

"You accept?" he cried, eagerly, his eyes lighted with a too selfish joy.

"Yes—I accept."

He heeded not that the words were cold and mechanical; that the hand was like ice in his own; that the chaste forehead was like marble to the touch of his warm lips. She was his, this beautiful girl that he had coveted.

If he had known what torrents of feeling surged in that apparently pulseless bosom—feelings she could scarcely understand, and could not control at all—would he have been less happy?

Your selfish natures never blush at a possibility of wrong-doing; they are always right and obtuse almost to sublimity.

"Get me your brother's paper, Miss Angy—let me dispense with that formal prefix; I will set things right before the sun goes down. You are agitated now, wait awhile. Remember there is no danger, the secret shall be kept safe in my bosom; no one will ever dream that the honour of your name was ever suspected. I will call again in an hour, return to the city with your brother, take up the note, and then you will all breathe more freely. No wonder you were pale and frightened, my poor darling. Say to your mother that my man killed the game I brought over early this morning—it is a present for her. You are not so sad now?"

The girl shook her head.

(To be continued.)

It is expected that shortly Mr. Disraeli will propose a vote for Prince Leopold, who has just come of age, and is, therefore, entitled to the same allowance as his brothers, and a farther sum upon his marriage.

The summer manoeuvres at Aldershot will be on a very large scale. There will be two separate campaigns, and each will be attended by about 25,000 men. These campaigns will help to test the Control Department, which was proved to be by no means perfect at Dartmoor last year.

The Prince of Wales, having been present on the 26th of January at a trotting race at Moscow, forwarded on the 16th March, through the Grand Equerry of the Czarowitz, a large silver vase adorned with two horses' heads, and bearing the inscription, "The Prince of Wales to the Society of the Trotting Races of Moscow."

EXTRAORDINARY CAREFULNESS.—The other day a respectable old woman deposited a couple of sovereigns in the Paisley Savings Bank. In handing over the money to the teller, she quaintly observed that she had withdrawn the identical sovereigns from the bank when there was a rush on the Western Bank at the time of its collapse. She had intended, however, after the savings bank had been started on its present basis, to have re-invested her money, but somehow or other she had always felt that personal possession was more real than an account at her credit. The teller calculated that the old lady, instead of now having only two sovereigns at her credit, might have had three, had she been a depositor since the disaster of the Western Bank.

THE RIBBON MANUFACTURE IN RUSSIA.—The ribbon industry of Russia employs forty-three factories, with 1,000 workmen, and an annual production of half a million roubles value. The silk branch is at a disadvantage, from the tardiness of the manufacturers in accommodating themselves to the changes of fashion. The factories for galloon are 23 in number, and there are upwards of 60 gold-thread factories, employing about 2,000 workmen. The annual produce may be estimated at 2½ million of dollars. Embroidery in a national style is carried out on a large scale. The Russian women show great skill in these productions, many of the embroideries intended for ecclesiastical purposes exhibiting representations of painting. The immigration of Persian artists has led to the embroidering of tablecloths, ladies' jackets, etc., in their national style.

PLASTIC CARBON FOR FILTERS.—According to Professor Kletzninsky, two mixtures have been found best adapted to this purpose in practice—the one consisting of 60 parts of coke, 20 of animal carbon, 10 of charcoal, and 10 of pipe-clay; the other of 10 parts of coke, 30 of animal carbon, 20 of charcoal, and 40 of short-fibred asbestos. The ingredients, except the asbestos, are finely powdered, passed through a sieve, and intimately mixed while dry, and then mixed with as much molasses or syrup as may be necessary to form a plastic mass. about as

much as the weight of the dry powder. The dough is well worked, and then formed into cylinders or discs, allowed to dry for some time at a moderate temperature, and then burned in a carefully heated muffle, without access of air. After being slowly cooled, the soluble salts are extracted, and the sulphide of iron decomposed, by placing the article in very dilute hydrochloric acid. The filter is then thoroughly washed in running water, dried, and again heated to dull redness, in a well closed muffle, and finally shaped, by turning, as may be desired, for beakers, funnels, etc. Closed hollow vessels can be formed by luting together two suitably shaped vessels of the substance by means of a certain paste. This is prepared by covering the turnings from the washed masses, thinly, with pure syrup (made by dissolving refined sugar in half its weight of water), and triturating them. The edges of the vessels to be luted are first well fitted together, and then coated with the paste, so as also to fill all the seams; and the whole, after drying thoroughly, is to be burned at a dull-red heat. While the fused sugar-carbon affords a vitreous mass, the asbestos, coke and coal give firmness and form to the framework. The charcoal removes especially fusil oil and odorous gases, and the nitrogenous animal carbon extractive and colouring matter. Tubes of different materials can be firmly cemented to the filters by plastic sulphur or good cement, such as is made with chalk, clay, and water-glass.

## THE BLENKARNE INHERITANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Miss Arlingcourt's Will," "The Ebony Casket,"  
"The Secret of Schwarzenburg," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER XIX.

ETHEL ROSCOE continued to weep silently despite her lover's reassuring words, and his endeavours to rally her with regard to the absurdity of any belief in the fortune-teller's presence.

"I know it," faltered Ethel; "but after my uncle's talk to-day it seems to take double significance. I think she is right. There seems to be a curse upon us. Just as I believe myself growing secure of happiness this great trouble is coming upon me."

"I do not understand you," said Frank, in utter perplexity.

"No; how should you? And yet I am not so silly as you think me. It is only from other circumstances that that dreadful woman's words obtain significance. I shall be miserable if I marry Captain Vansittant, and they want me to, all of them. And if I refuse I shall cut them off from the fortune they need so much, that will add so much brightness to their lives."

"Marry Captain Vansittant!" repeated Frank, dismally.

And then their eyes met. What use after that to counterfeit in speech?

"Miss Roscoe!" cried Frank, "I may say something to you this once. Afterward, if you forbid, I will never mention the subject again. I also have had my fond hopes, and they are connected with you. From the first moment of my seeing you, facing the bear in the laze, I am certain I have loved you."

Ethel turned crimson and then pale, but said nothing.

"If there is anything I can do to help you, or to shield you, you must know, after this, how gladly I shall respond if you will call upon me. If my love, my lifelong efforts, my tenderest devotion could tempt you—"

And he paused and looked at her wistfully.

"Ethel! Ethel!" called out a shrill voice. They both turned hastily. There was Madame Roscoe, looking annoyed, and indeed angry, hurrying down the path, with Captain Vansittant behind her.

"England at last!" said Daisy, with a thrill in her voice.

The little group of four people had separated somewhat from the other crowd of passengers just disembarked from the steamer at the Liverpool wharf, and were gazing around them in eager interest.

"It is a veritable fact," responded her grandfather, joyously. "After all our vicissitudes, safe back again on English soil. Heaven be thanked for this mercy!"

"Somehow it looks natural," murmured the girl. "I seem to know all about it. Why, uncle, how queer it is there is such a distinct picture rising up before me of a busy street down below here somewhere, and I wandering around, bewildered and frightened."

Blennerhasset smiled back to the inquiring eyes, but it was with a constrained and uneasy look around his grim lips.

"Like as not I have told you such a story," he said. "I was always telling you stories in those days."

"Why, yes, you brought her here too. You came out by this line, didn't you?" observed Mr. Wymer.

Blennerhasset only nodded, and turning to Algeron Vansittant, who stood silently looking around him, he said:

"It is new for you, also, sir. Are you as enthusiastic as Daisy, and believe the soil of old England something very different from common earth?"

"Our anticipations are very much alike, I suspect," answered Algeron, exchanging a sympathetic smile with Daisy. "And I am sure we have talked it over together so many times that neither of us has anything new to offer."

"You have been a kind and generous friend to us," said Tom Wymer, "and mayhap the peculiar circumstances and your goodness and condescension have made us forget more than we ought the difference in our stations. We wish you much happiness and prosperity, Captain Vansittant, and ask your pardon for anything done amiss. I will call a cab for you, if you wish."

Algeron looked around from one downcast face to the other, and said, hastily:

"What, because our feet are on English ground are we to cast off the friendship brought about by ocean perils and dangers? My dear friends, for friends you have all grown to be, do you mean to give me up, and leave me a stranger in a strange land? I thought I was going with you still, at least until my own plans are settled and your home is established."

Daisy lifted up her drooping head at this, and shot a triumphant glance at her father, who looked over to Blennerhasset, who in turn answered back with a deprecating, confused smile.

"We shall only be too much honoured, sir," stammered the latter. "We were only thinking of you, Captain Vansittant. English caste is as strict, in its way, as the Hindoo's and we are very humble people."

"And so am I, more especially without my letters of credit. Nonsense, you cannot shake me off so easily. Come, Blennerhasset, we are all going to some comfortable hotel, I take it. You, as the least of a novice, are to procure the vehicle which will take us there."

And then, while the two old men stepped forward for a momentary consultation, he turned to Daisy, and drawing the little hand through his arm, said, reproachfully:

"And were you so ready also to say good-bye to me, Miss Daisy?"

A soft blush crept over Daisy's cheek, but her clear, truthful eyes looked fearlessly into his as she replied:

"I know very little of the world, and if, as uncle says, it would be injurious to you to associate with us, why then I should certainly say it promptly."

"This is one of the cases where we shall presume to doubt your uncle's judgment," returned Algeron, gaily. "Do you think, after all our anticipations, I shall allow myself to be shut out from sharing your impressions of the grand mother country? Ah, here comes our vehicle! Come, Daisy, put off that constrained look, or I shall fancy stepping upon the shore has made another person of me. Let us enjoy ourselves over this ride like children newly let out from school."

And presently they were all safely established in the cab, and proceeding swiftly towards the town.

Blennerhasset's face held a new, scared look, that would have disturbed them all had not their attention been diverted. He had given one shivering glance towards the little building at the end of the wharf, another towards the green water, slipping lazily between the great black piles, and then had dropped his head between his hands, and would not risk another single look.

But Wymer's spirits seemed to rise with every step of their progress.

"Why, it is not so changed but that I could find my way anywhere!" he exclaimed, joyfully. "See, Blennerhasset, there's the old barrack building, not a bit changed. What gay soldier boys we were when we were in the old regiment there. Many's the weary year come and gone; and many's the joy and the sorrow since; but through them both, old fellow, you were faithful and true."

And Tom Wymer stretched out his hand and grasped that of his comrade.

There was a mist in the eyes of both when that hearty grip relaxed.

The strong friendship of these two was something touching and beautiful to see, and Algeron and Daisy smiled to each other their silent recognition of it.

"We were more than soldier comrades, Tom," said Blennerhasset; "more than friends even, to my



thinking. In the pair of us we had all the qualities needed for a perfect content. What I lacked you supplied, and where you needed a little bolstering I could give it. And you have always seemed something to me like the mother, or sister, or wife, maybe, whose tender companionship I have dreamed about often enough, but have never known. You saved my life for me. Shouldn't I be a brute to forget how you nursed me through that terrible time?"

"And you have been everything to me ever since then. But the best deed of all was the hunting up my poor, unhappy girl's history, and bringing me her child. Ah, I had a sore heart then. But for the hope you brought me I believe I should have died."

"I believed it myself," spoke Blennerhasset, solemnly, with his eyes upward; "and so I brought you the child."

"My best treasure—the darling that won me back to love life, and to plan and hope and dream again," commented Wymer, stroking the hand that Daisy had slipped into his.

Blennerhasset looked at them wistfully. Something in his face recalled its expression on the night of the shipwreck to Algeron, and leaning forward the latter said, smilingly:

"You wanted me to keep that box of yours until the journey was quite ended. I think I may as well give it back now, unless you are afraid of being shipwrecked in the cab."

Blennerhasset glanced hastily into his old comrade's face, and said, apologetically:

"It's only a little affair of days gone by, you know. Something I asked Captain Vansittart to attend to if I should be lost."

And he took the box and thrust it hastily into his pocket. And then the arrival at the hotel diverted the attention of all.

Algeron hastened to inquire at the address he had given in his Bombay letter, but no letters had arrived. Wymer and Blennerhasset left Daisy, and went off on a tour of investigation in the neighbourhood of their old haunts. They were alike feverishly impatient to be established in a home of their own.

It took them a week to discover just the place to satisfy every demand, for there were certain requisites imperative which are seldom found united.

"It must be where we can see green fields and smell the fresh, healthy mould," quoth Tom Wymer.

"And where I can have my vegetable garden, and Daisy her posies," added Blennerhasset, "and yet be near a town."

"And pray look out to see that there is a glimpse of water somewhere—a dear little brook, or a river sparkle, or a broad sweep of lake," said Daisy.

"In short, let it be a modern Paradise," laughed Algeron.

"And all for the modest sum we are able to pay," retorted Tom Wymer, ruefully. "It looks rather hopeless to be sure."

"Ah, only be sure of the surroundings. We shall make any sort of a house beautiful, I am certain," returned Daisy.

After half a dozen failures, one day Blennerhasset came stumbling back jubilant enough to attempt a minute.

"Hurrah! Daisy, my darling, we've found the very spot! Just the coziest, sweetest, loveliest little nook. You'll fall in love with it the minute your eyes fall on it. It was rather dear, to be sure, but we have closed the bargain."

"At the expense of your last guinea in the savings bank," said Daisy's grandfather, sorrowfully. "I can't feel right to have you do so, Blennerhasset, leaving everything in my name too."

Blennerhasset had dropped into a chair and was mopping his damp forehead with his brilliant-coloured silk handkerchief.

"Nonsense! I think you are too old to be such a simpleton, Tom Wymer. Isn't what is mine yours, and won't you and Daisy have to take care of this battered old hulk? Let us talk rather about going out at once to take possession. Daisy will know better than we what furniture will answer. I think we are going to be as happy there as the days are bright and beautiful. Tom will get strength fast, pottering in the good old English earth. Daisy will grow as sweet as the roses, and I—"

"Well, and what are you going to do?" asked Daisy, archly. "You yourself, tyrannical old uncle, making us do just as you command, even if it is to rob your poor old bank account."

"I am going to live in clover, grow a new limb, like as not, in place of the cork leg that has served me for so many years—who knows?" replied he, merrily. "That's one thing. Then for another I'm going to drill the boys of a boarding-school near one hour every day, and get my pay for it beside. And some of the same boys are coming to our cottage to learn the flute and fife, and that's Mr. Tom Wymer's

part; and these agreeable tasks will help eke out our income beside, don't you see? The blessed little cottage couldn't be in a better spot. The boarding-school is no small item in its desirable qualities. What could two old fellows ask better?"

The tears came softly into Daisy's eyes. "And what am I to do?" she asked. "I am not going to be a drone, I can tell you."

"Bless your busy little hands! I should say not," replied Blennerhasset, looking fondly into that high-bred, wonderfully beautiful face. "You are to make the brightness of the whole house, and pet us, and love us, and enjoy yourself."

"And do the work, of course," said her grandfather. "That will be something, you may be sure, taking care of the house, with no tribe of Hindoos to answer orders."

Daisy clapped her hands gleefully. "See how neat I will keep it, and I will tyrannize over you just as grandpapa tells about the old spinster's dozen."

"I have spoken to a stout girl near," said Blennerhasset, looking over to Wymer, deprecatingly. "My drilling lesson will just pay her wages. I shan't have Daisy made a drudge."

"Then there's where you are wrong," said Tom Wymer, decidedly. "Daisy is a poor man's daughter. You are trying to make a lady of her. I tell you mischief will come of it. I have had my warning in her mother's fate. I can't let Daisy be brought to look out of her station."

Blennerhasset sighed while he smiled.

"We are at the old fight again, Tom; where's the use? You know I always conquer."

"But it was different in India. She couldn't work there. Here in England it is another thing. Listen to me. Don't I love Daisy better than my life? And I say it will be better for her to do as other girls of her station do. Leave her to the household tasks without any girl."

"She will have enough to do any way," returned Blennerhasset, quite as firmly. "I insist that the girl comes. I want Daisy to take lessons in a good many useful studies, and she must have time for them."

"You want to make a lady of her," cried Wymer, as angry as he could ever be with his old comrade.

"Please Heaven, I do," returned he, looking up again with that peculiarly solemn expression they had been puzzled by before.

Daisy dropped her beautiful head to his shoulder.

"Dear uncle, I will be that, and save the girl's wages beside," she said, softly.

"Yes, you will be a lady—you are a lady," he answered. "Foolish old Tom, why do you struggle against fate? You cannot make a commonplace, rustic maiden of this child. Nature has set another seal upon her."

Tom Wymer caught the outstretched hand, and wrung it, and then clasping each other the two embraced the darling of their fond old hearts, and the little disagreement had ended, as Blennerhasset had said they always did, in his victory.

Upon this pretty picture—the blooming maiden clasped in the tender hold of these loving friends—came Algeron, his own face pale and disturbed, an open letter in his hand.

"You have heard from Calcutta?" exclaimed Wymer. "Not ill-tidings, I hope?"

"Your papers cannot be replaced?" ejaculated Daisy, starting forward to meet him.

"The most heartrending news!" exclaimed Algeron. "And I am quite overwhelmed by their direful purport. General Vansittart is dead."

Their sorrowful sympathy was, he well knew, sincere and unfeigned, and he found consolation in it even amidst all the bitterness of his unavailing grief.

"The event must have been very sudden," observed Wymer, "and all Calcutta will be in mourning. I wonder indeed we have not seen it here in the 'Gazette.'"

"Read the letter for yourself, and you will see why. It is all inexplicable to me. Why should Aimée write the letter? I should have supposed it would be Adam's duty—Adam, who was always my friend," repeated Algeron, wistfully. "Now, indeed, the general's last words return to me with double significance. Can it be that he foreboded the mournful event? Good Heavens! the more I reflect upon it the more certain I seem to feel that he knew we were never to meet again. I remember his strange pallor, his faltering voice. Ah, yes, and it was Sir Richard, his physician, who was waiting in the ante-room. He was already ill. He knew what was coming. Oh, my more than father! And I have neglected your last instructions; I have lost the belt you charged me to keep so carefully! I am no longer able to follow out your instructions. Unhappy victim that I am!"

And Algeron sank into a chair, and covered his agitated face with his hands.

"Not the general's son!" cried Mr. Wymer, as he glanced over the letter the young gentleman had thrust into his hands. "This is some infamous plot, Captain Vansittart. All Calcutta knows you as the general's son."

"Nay," returned Algeron, mournfully; "that much is true, if everything else is false. It was upon this last mournful farewell interview that the general revealed it to me. He sent me hither with the proofs to establish my rights, with sealed instructions for my movements; above all, with a belt in which were concealed papers I imagine of the greatest value. And I have lost everything, and he is no longer here to reveal the secret."

"You must find that infamous villain who stole all," exclaimed Daisy, impetuously. "You must go and look in such places as your letters of introduction would have taken you. We shall have a chance to show our gratitude now. We can identify you, or testify to his imposture."

"That is a good thought," pronounced Blennerhasset. "I think you had better adopt it."

"I wonder if our united testimony would weigh against one in possession of all the proofs, and well supplied with money by means of my stolen letters of credit; for you know we are all strangers to the parties in question, and might naturally be supposed to be a band of impostors leagued together?" asked Algeron, dejectedly.

"There is a good deal of truth in Captain Vansittart's doubt, Blennerhasset," said Wymer, reflectively.

"But the truth and right always triumph," asserted Daisy, with that sweet, serene air of calm conviction which never failed to impress her listeners. "We will make his cause ours, will we not, uncle? will we not, grandpapa?"

"To be sure we will," answered both, promptly.

Algeron stretched out a hand to each.

"I should be an ungrateful man to sit down and despond. I have two honest and noble friends in England, and one generous-hearted, wise little adviser. Why, I am still rich, whatever chances. You give me a new heart. I will sit down and write to Adam for a full explanation. Then I will look after my letters of credit. There is only one address, I remember. It is to the Blenkarne family, in Devonshire somewhere."

Blennerhasset and Wymer exchanged astonished glances.

"Why, that must be the great place near our own little cottage," quoth the former. "You know how much we said Daisy would enjoy watching its grand doings. I am sure of the name Blenkarne Terrace. Then you can do nothing better than to go with us to our cottage."

Daisy smiled joyously.

"You see, it is all coming right. Be sure that you will yet be able to fulfil your father's wishes," she said. "Now, Captain Vansittart, do not look so forlorn. I will venture to promise that you fulfil them."

Algeron looked gravely into the charming young face.

"Don't promise them all," he said. "I am very sure I do not ask to have them all fulfilled."

At which she opened her eyes, and questioned with them his meaning.

But he did not give it then.

The next day they all went to the cottage. It was indeed in a charming situation, nestling in a narrow strip of valley, with shady woods on one side, and on the other a pretty lane leading over to a broad highway, beyond which clustered the gray roofs of the town; and twisting in tortuously between all was a rippling river, bright and smiling as the blue sky, which bent over them as if in cheery welcome when they rode up to this new home.

The cottage itself was a picturesque building, and half-hidden as it was with great festoons of clambering ivy and tangled woodbine, and overrun with wild rose-bushes, called forth from Daisy an exclamation of fervent delight.

"But we shall need to be rather busier than the birds," said her grandfather; "especially when the load of furniture comes. Ah! there is uncle's assistant. I do believe she has taken half the work off our hands. See how clean everything has been made."

It was a right merry day, especially after the goods arrived, and none enjoyed it more than Algeron, who paused now and then in the midst of his hammering or sawing to ask himself if it could really be he was that same Algeron Vansittart who had lounged through so many years of India's indolent ease, and who vaguely prided himself upon his aristocratic position and secured fortune.

"Truly we do not know what a day may bring forth for us either in experience or emotion," he murmured, with a shade of melancholy crossing his face.

He was standing with upraised hammer fastening up a window curtain. Daisy saw his face and glided up to him and said, in her gentle voice of tender reproach:

"Now you are fretting again, Captain Vansittant. Haven't I promised that it shall all be bright again? And you said the princess obtained all her wishes. Remember your despondency at the island," she added, playfully.

He gave her as bright a smile as she could ask. "True enough. If the very worst come it is not so terrible. Will you still keep me here and let me work for you all, and be as patient with my mistakes?"

She gave him a gay glance and ran away, content in having diverted his mind. As the chief room began to assume a cosy home look the young mistress decided she could wait no longer but must fill the vases with such flowers as she could find.

She was out by the roadside gathering her hands full when a carriage and pair of horsemen came dashing swiftly along. She glanced up shyly, and was turning away, blushing, when she heard a rich voice exclaim:

"Oh, look, mamma, look, Captain Vansittant, what a perfect face!"

It was a young and pretty girl who spoke, unaware evidently that the wind carried her words to the object of their observation.

Daisy would not have given it another thought but for the name, which instantaneously arrested her attention. She stopped short and gravely and calmly looked over the faces of the party. A fine, soldierly-looking gentleman of middle age sat on the seat with a pretty girl, a lady rather haughty but pale and careworn in appearance occupied the rear seat, and beside her, and half hidden by her figure, was another gentleman. The two horsemen were handsome young men, but both strangers. Her rapid glance showed her all this.

It was the gentleman on the rear seat on the side opposite to her who was evidently the Captain Vansittant to whom the young girl had spoken, and it was his face Daisy was determined to see.

She crossed behind the carriage and hurried forward. At that same instant the object of her curiosity leaned out to look after her. Those jetty, basilisk eyes! How Daisy ever forget them? He drew his head back hastily, when aware that she also was looking at him, but she had seen enough.

She looked back to the house anxiously. Oh, that her grandfather would appear, that some one would come to follow the carriage! But they were all busy within the house. Daisy gave one little desperate sigh and followed herself, determined to know where the carriage proceeded and whither Algonon must look to find the villainous usurper of his name and property.

Fortunately for Daisy her espionage did not lead her far away. To her equal surprise and satisfaction she saw the carriage turn down the lane that branched from the highway just beyond their cottage, and leave its occupants at the quaint old manor house that she had already promised Algonon should be sketched. She loitered in the vicinity long enough to see the empty carriage taken away by some one who appeared to be waiting for it, and then hastened home, reaching it before her absence had occasioned alarm.

She went up to Algonon, her eyes shining brightly and resolutely.

"I have found him for you. And he goes by your name. Promise me that you will follow my advice and keep quiet until you learn all his plans."

They all stared at her as if believing she had taken leave of her senses. A few rapid words, however, explained her meaning, and then they all gathered around her in deep and anxious consultation. Her plan was finally adopted.

## CHAPTER XI.

It is needless to say that the fortune-teller, whose direful prophecies had so startled Ethel Roscoe and angered Frank was the eccentric mistress of Cedar Knoll. For full an hour after they left her she remained there waiting in the carriage, leaning her sharp chin on her hands, and they clasped tightly upon the head of her ebony cane, with her uncanny black eyes roving restlessly from one object to another. They were quick to seize upon the shambling, shabby figure which at the expiration of that time came creeping through the bushes.

"At last, Amariah Ayre," she snarled; "let us hope you have brought enough to pay for all this waiting."

The coachman roused himself from the doze into which he had fallen and gathered up his reins. The strange woman lifted her cane and pointed with it to the seat opposite her, and into this Amariah scrambled and sank down with a little smothered sort of sigh,

immediately upon which the carriage started and proceeded at a leisurely pace toward Cedar Knoll.

"Well, have you lost your tongue?" was the amiable mistress's next salutation. "Why don't you explain how it is these beggars are able to hire their carriage and go off pleasuring in this style?"

"They didn't talk about such things," whimpered Amariah, cringing as if he expected that bony hand to administer prompt rebuke.

"Idiot! why don't you tell me what you did discover, if there is anything at all to be told?"

"I've found out the visitor's name, and where he comes from," spoke up Amariah, with new energy. "Somebody has sent him, somebody in Calcutta—a great man, I should think, for he promises a great fortune to them."

"A great fortune to them—the hated race!" shrieked out Madame Blanc. "No wonder they are taking new courage and putting on airs!"

"Yes, and it seems to be all on condition of the young lady's marrying this Captain Vansittant. And the young man is willing, and the mother and the rest all eager for it—all but the young lady."

"Humph! I understand. I can read faces, especially when they are as transparent as those two were. So she doesn't want to marry the fortune. Well, well, my lady's handsome tutor has done some service, after all," muttered Madame Blanc. "Go on, go on," she added, sharply, seeing that he had paused and was staring into her face with gaping mouth.

"I heard a long talk between this Calcutta young gentleman and Madame Roscoe. It seems they neither of them know exactly how the fortune is coming, but this stranger in Calcutta holds the secret. And they are waiting for instructions from him."

"Ah!" And in making that little ejaculation the old woman drew in her breath so like the hiss of a serpent that even Amariah, used as he was to her strange ways, started and shivered.

"Go on."

"I have found out a new story about the young man Aubrey. He is in love with the great banker's daughter."

"Do you call that new?" she sneered. "Go on and tell me every hint you caught concerning the Calcutta benefactor, who holds fortunes so cheaply as to throw one at the feet of this proposed bride and bridegroom. Have you his name?"

"His son is called Algonon Vansittant, and they were continually speaking about General Vansittant. I was obliged to keep at a little distance lest they should discover me, and so lost some few words. But that, I think, must be the one. The young man was expecting letters."

"Exactly; and in them we shall find all we seek to know," cried out the old woman, striking her cane furiously upon the carriage floor. "Amariah Ayre, you shall have an opportunity to distinguish yourself in my regards, to add another hundred pounds to your legacy in my will! It is positively delightful!"

He did not look as if he shared very heartily in the delight, but returned, meekly:

"What shall I do, Madame Blanc?"

"You must get the young man's letters and copy them for me," she answered, coolly.

Amariah's eyes protruded.

"But, madam, it is—a prison offence. What if I fail and am discovered?"

She laughed shrilly.

"You will not fail, my good Amariah; you will go to work so securely and adroitly. I release you this moment from all other duties until this is accomplished. Go and find out where he lives, who waits upon him, brings his letters. It is a light task, you foolish fellow. Money need not be spared should it be required, but I think it can all be managed by your own shrewd wits. It is well indeed that I came to-day. It is high time I was at work myself. My lady has grown weak and soft, so I will have her no more in my councils. You and I will accomplish everything, Amariah."

Amariah pulled off his hat, and made a forlorn bow in acknowledgment of this last.

"Yes," she repeated, vehemently, "there must be no more dallying; the doom must be accomplished, and my vow fulfilled, before—"

But here she broke off abruptly, holding up her thin, bloodless hand, and staring at it gravely.

Then she burst into a shrill laugh, and said, triumphantly:

"Nonsense! there is no fear but I am good for another dozen of years. No fear at all—is there, Amariah?"

Amariah was honest in that much, at least, when he responded, stoutly:

"I don't believe there is, Madame Blanc; upon my life, I don't believe there is any doubt about it."

Her keen eyes searched over his face.

"Ah, I see. There would be more alacrity in earning that one hundred pounds if it would not be so many years coming. Well, well, I'll humour you this time. You shall have the money when you bring the letters."

Whereupon Amariah brightened up amazingly, and, as they reached the business street, he said, eagerly:

"Perhaps you'd as well drop me here. I'll go down to the stable where their carriage was hired, and see what I can pick up."

Which suggestion was adopted, and Madame Blanc, left free from any curious, watchful eye—fell into a deep reverie, from which she broke out now and then in a few fierce words of soliloquy.

"I have seen this East Indian. There is not a familiar feature in his face, and I care not what heathen woman might be the mother, sure am I there would be a look I could recognize if any of that hated blood ran in his veins," she muttered once, and struck with her cane upon the cushions opposite. "Who is he, then? And what is this General Vansittant's object? I suspect who the general may be. I am almost sure of that. Let him take care! He shall feel my toils tightening about him if he meddles with English doings. Let him keep to his agreement!"

And then again she muttered, uneasily:

"What great fortune could come by reason of such a marriage? Tush! there was nothing left to either family except the great chimera—the Blenkarne emeralds."

And here she laughed contemptuously.

But the next day Amariah came to her with the copies of two letters.

"I think, Madame Blanc, we could not have selected a better time to look after the India mail," he declared, triumphantly.

Her eyes glittered with fierce joy, and, turning to the iron box that stood always on the stand beside her chair, she drew forth the golden coins, and tossed them to him, he catching them as a dog might snatch at morsels of meat thrown charily to him.

"I know very well you would not dare deceive me with spurious letters, Amariah," quoth she, grimly; "it would be as much as your pitiful life is worth, and you are aware of it. Take your price then, and make the most of it. You have done well in this matter, whether the letters are important or not."

Then she waved her hand for him to leave her, and, when alone, she spread open the letters, and read them through twice, each one, before she laid them by. One was written by Aimée, one by Adam; both were addressed to Algonon Vansittant. Then she folded her hands, as was her habit, over the golden head of her cane, and, leaning her chin upon them, with those weird, wicked black eyes dancing gleefully, she laughed long and loud.

"So there's a counter plot! Excellent! excellent! Unfortunately for Madame Aimée, whoever she may be, I shall be under the necessity of making a slight disturbance of her plots. Though the girl may marry the olive-skinned heathen as speedily as they choose. But the belt—and the concealed treasure! Ah, ha! they shall fall into my clutches! They shall not go to make prosperity and happiness for the race whose misery I have vowed to accomplish. I guess now what they contain. This cautiously worded letter signed 'Adam' reveals the truth to me. It would indeed have been a wonderful deliverance, a grand triumph for them. Ah, how nearly they had escaped me!"

"Bravo, Amariah Ayre! This was a good work of yours—the best work you have done for many a day. But there is still a more important task awaiting you. Cost what it will, I must have that belt! It is plain neither of these writers dare reveal its true contents. It shall be left for my hands to investigate. Amariah must find means to drug this youth, and see what the belt is like, and must have another made to replace it before he takes it away. Ha, ha! the treasure shall be of little avail. The Blenkarne emeralds shall sleep another century. I will find a more cunning hiding-place than the famous Marmaduke. No Blenkarne heir shall ever touch them."

And nodding vigorously, she touched the bell, which summoned Amariah into her presence once more.

He looked a little frightened, apprehensive that the gold he had been counting and recounting was to be snatched away from him. With that quick intuition of hers she read all that was in his thought, and she laughed grimly.

"Nay, most worthy Amariah, you have no cause to fear. I am but giving you opportunity to double the hoard. There is still another adroit service required of you. And as little time as possible must be lost. Does this young man have a servant of any sort?"

"Yes, a son of old David's is a sort of valet there, and a queer sort of master he finds him. One minute as topping as a lord, and the next it is 'hail fellow



well met.' It was good luck for me finding David's son there."

"Excellent luck! And it will be likely to serve you again. The gentleman has his glass of wine before retiring, I'll be bound," she laughed. "Listen, and I will give you a plan."

Amariah twisted his fingers together nervously. She was leading him deeper and deeper into wrongdoing, and he knew it. But—another hundred pounds!

"It's pretty risky," he ventured. "The getting you the letters was nothing to it. And then who knows what is in the belt?"

"I do," rejoined Madame Blanc, fiercely. "There are certain important papers there, important for me to obtain—almost as valuable papers as those I hold, Amariah Ayre, which can send you to prison any minute I choose. Take your choice quickly. I have no time to lose. Two hundred pounds in my service, or a prison, and ruin of your own setting up."

Amariah's teeth chattered beneath the malignant glare of those glittering eyes.

"Of course I mean to serve you, Madame Blanc," returned he. "I only thought—I meant—I—"

"Dotard!" sneered she. "Your greedy soul will sometime over-reach itself. You wanted two hundred pounds. That was the sum I intended to give you from the first. I shall halve it now, and you will do my work just as well."

He stood cowed and silent.

"Well," demanded she, "is the work to be done or not?"

"It shall be done," answered Amariah, hoarsely.

"Go, then; this very night take accurate copy of the belt."

And as he left the room she muttered angrily: "He is curious about the belt. I see that. I must take care his greedy fingers do not meddle with it. It would never do to trust him, if he knew or dreamed of its value. At this crowning stroke of my policy I must trust none but myself. And once in my hands, let them plan and hope and dream; it will not avail."

The next day Amariah came to her in much better spirits.

"It will be scarcely as dangerous a task as I anticipated, Madame Blanc," said he. "The young chap drinks his bottle of wine every night before getting to bed, and sleeps almost sound enough for my purpose without any opiate. He is a curious fellow—ally as a fox in some things, and as simple as a baby in others. I have arranged all to my satisfaction. His man is off to some sort of a show to-morrow night, and will be out of my way. I shall make the mock belt to-day when I find some of the curious yellow cloth like that India stuff it is covered with."

"I am glad to see you are interested in the affair," said Madame Blanc, grimly, "as well as more sanguine than when I proposed it. Then I may look for the belt to-morrow night?"

"The next morning rather," corrected Amariah; "for your bed-time will have long gone by before I shall be able to remove the belt."

"My bed-time can be suited to my own dictation," responded she, drily. "I shall certainly keep awake until I have your report."

And then, perceiving the dismay he tried his best to hide, she added, not without a certain malicious enjoyment of his discomfiture:

"Do not think, my worthy Amariah, that I shall leave you to face all this alone. I shall be there, close at hand, where you may hand me the belt the moment you remove it. Oh, no. I shall not leave you to face the danger you so much apprehended all alone! Never fear that."

"Will you venture there at night, and so late, madam?" questioned he in the meekest tone, but with a look of utter astonishment.

"I have seen the midnight stars before this," returned she, chuckling out a queer laugh. "I am not a young girl now, you know, my thoughtful Amariah. Having arrived at years of discretion, and under your valiant guardianship, I am quite sure I may venture. Look you, if I remember right, there is always a hackney coach stationed there waiting passengers. We will take care that it has a customer to take it off a goodly distance, and my carriage shall be in its place, so if there are many passers-by, which is unlikely at a late hour, there will be no cause for remark. You shall come down with the belt, and give it to me, and I will drive away with it, all in as brief a time as possible. So even if its loss were discovered you would be safe from any molestation, a peaceful citizen walking along quietly without any suspicious article about you. See how thoughtful I can be for your safety! Is not that an excellent arrangement?"

There was nothing for him but to express satisfaction, however he may have felt chagrined and defeated.

Madame Blanc's black eyes twinkled as she watched him shuffle away.

"There shall be no time given his prying fingers," she muttered, "no time to search into the mysteries of the belt—it shall yield up its secrets to me alone!"

(To be continued.)

## SCIENCE.

**A NEW SIGN OF DEATH.**—At the moment of death there become disengaged from venous blood certain gases which are normally confined therein, and which form a pneumatosi or swelling of the veins. This action in the veins of the retina, says M. Bonchut, is easily appreciable by the ophthalmoscope, and constitutes an immediate and certain sign of death. The pneumatosi is indicated by the interruption of the column of blood, and is comparable to that observed in an interrupted column of a coloured alcohol thermometer.

**TELEGRAPHING BY SOUND.**—The system of reading by sound is at the present moment occupying the serious attention of the authorities of the Postal Telegraphic Department. In the Morse "sounder" the clockwork is altogether dispensed with, and the apparatus may be said to resolve itself into a pair of coils and an armature, the stroke of which, as it is attracted by the electric current, creates the sound from which the signals are interpreted. The system is, so far as the Post Office is concerned, only beginning to liep as yet, but by-and-bye there will probably be some hundreds of these tiny metal tongues clattering away at the same time in the great central telegraph station of the metropolis.

**SOUTH AFRICAN DIAMONDS.**—A note on the diamonds of South Africa was communicated to the geological section of the British Association, during its recent meeting at Bradford, by Professor Tennant. He said that the first diamond arrived in England from South Africa in 1867. It weighed 21 carats. Last year there was one of 110 carats, and this year one has been brought over which in its present rough state is larger than the Koh-i-Noor itself, and which when cut down will probably be not much smaller than that celebrated gem. He gave a history of the Koh-i-Noor, showing how it has been reduced from its original weight of 787 carats to 102 carats, its present weight. It is a great mistake, said the speaker, to suppose that, because the diamond is the hardest substance known, it is not easily fractured. He showed by means of a diagram the fractures that had been made in the Koh-i-Noor, and remarked that the diamond is in fact one of the most brittle stones we know of.

**BASTAERT'S PROCESS FOR DRYING ALL KINDS OF FABRICS.**—The following process is said to be applicable to heavy or light goods of cotton, linen, wool, or silk, bleached or unbleached, printed or dyed. On account of the uniformity of its action it imparts to the goods, without any harshness in feeling, a finer finish than any other method. With all this advantage it consumes a minimum of fuel, demands little room, does not require a special boiler, and is exceedingly simple. In the operation steam is passed from a boiler under a pressure of three to six atmospheres, and is superheated, without increasing its pressure, by passing through heated tubes. It finally issues into a number of small jets, uniformly distributed along a tube, which, with the air drawn along and heated by it, impinges, by a simple, suitable construction of the box surrounding the jets, upon the cloth moved in front of it. The distance of the cloth from the jets is adjustable for different fabrics, and plans are also given for arranging several sheets of steam to play on the cloth in succession, or on both sides at the same time. The pressure, amounts of steam and air, temperature, etc., can be regulated to suit different cases. The steam, issuing under pressure, seems to act in part by penetrating the material.

**SPOTS ON THE SUN.**—The students of Vassar College report as follows:—"Our record is from February 17 to March 14 inclusive. The period has been marked by an unusual degree of change in the spots. Between the noon of February 17 and that of February 18, two small ones near the centre disappeared and a new one appeared. On February 20 a pair of spots were seen, a little to the east of the centre, which seemed to have been formed by the division of one spot noticed on February 18. A new small one had also appeared, a little past the centre. The next observation was made on February 26, when a good sized group was seen east of the centre, and on February 28 the largest member of this group showed an umbra of peculiar shape, resembling a palm leaf. On March 2 the stem of the leaf had apparently separated and formed a new spot close to the first. Considerable changes had taken place since February 28. One circular spot, which on that

day was on the eastern limb, had disappeared. March 3 showed a new spot to the west of the centre, and between March 3 and 4 there was a still more decided change. Two groups, which on the 3rd were small, had resolved themselves into several spots, and a new group had appeared below the centre. On the 4th two photographs were taken eleven minutes apart, and there were indications of change in the spots even in that short time. Owing to cloudy weather no observations were made after March 5 until March 14, when the spots were unusually large. Faculae were noticed February 17, 18 and 20, and March 5.

## HOW A GREAT DISCOVERY WAS MADE.

**M. CLAUDE COLLAS**, a celebrated French chemist, has recently published a paper on how discoveries are made. To M. Collas is due the honour of first recognizing nitro-benzol, or, as it is better known, essence of mirbane, a yellowish oil derived from coal tar, having a very sweet taste and odour strongly resembling that of bitter almonds, which latter peculiarity has led to its extended use in perfumery. In telling the story of how he found this substance, he says that during the year 1848 he was engaged in researches with a view of utilizing industrially the quantities of light oil which, having no employment and hence very small value, filled up the cisterns in gas-houses. It was at that time worth about a half-penny a pound. After vainly endeavouring to solve the problem for some time, M. Collas was about to relinquish the task, when it occurred to him to treat the oil in the same manner as gun-cotton, that is, with a mixture of monohydrated nitric acid and sulphuric acid.

"After the operation, the acids being separated by water," he says, "I was astonished to find at the bottom of my vessel a yellow button. The oil, at first lighter than the water, had become heavier, and hence sank. I touched it with my finger and rubbed it on my hand, when the strong characteristic odour at once became forcibly apparent. I had found an essence which, at the cheapest, could replace a substance in great demand, and which was worth, instead of five centimes, fifty francs a pound."

This discovery of mirbane was, however, only the prelude of the greater one, subsequently made, of the magnificent colours which could be derived from the aniline obtained by its decolorization by means of nascent hydrogen evolved from iron filings and acetic acid. In 1856 Perkin obtained from aniline the beautiful violet colour known as mauve, and since then the dyes thus derived have been produced to such an extent that their value to industry is almost beyond calculation. The little button of mirbane, however, in the modest laboratory of a Parisian apothecary, was the germ from which the whole grand series sprang.

There seems to be a kind of fatality about great discoveries which brings them forth in its own time. Men stumble across valuable ideas, and learn important truths too soon, which lie dead during their life time, only to be appreciated by the world after their death. The history of arts and sciences abounds in examples. Faraday, in 1825, found benzol in the tarry residues of gas works, but that illustrious chemist obtained neither fame nor profit for his discovery, which would doubtless have remained buried in the archives of the British Royal Institution until the attention of the scientific and industrial world was drawn to the chemical properties of the substance, although forty years later. Again, it often happens that discoveries escape those who are, by accident, placed in the very position to seize upon them. M. Collas cites, as evidence of this, the case of a French chemist who, in 1846, made a yellow dye for silk by the action of nitric acid on coal oil. The peculiar odour of the mirbane, which he must have produced, escaped him, and he failed to recognize the new substance which he had obtained.

**FLOWERS IN MEXICO.**—One thing which strikes one pleasantly in Mexico, is the wonderful abundance of flowers. All the year round crowds of Indians sit at the street corners in the early morning, making and selling for a real bouquets which in London could not be got for a guinea. Roses, verbenas, heliotropes and carnations grow like weeds; and besides the made-up bouquets, the Indians from the mountains bring down packs on their backs of the "Flor de San Juan" (Bovardia), a flower like an immense white jessamine; and for a "quartilla," one and one-half pence, you can buy an armful of it which will scent a whole house for a week. Our rooms were always fragrant with the bouquets which came in fresh every two or three days, and sometimes round the hanging baskets in the windows a lovely humming-bird would hover like a living emerald, and dip his long bill into the flowers for honey.



[THE SPIRIT OF POETRY.]

## HELEN'S STRATAGEM.

HELEN GRAVES was my father's ward. She came to our house after the death of her mother, who had been a widow for some years. She was a tall, shy girl of eleven. Before I saw her I pitied her, because of her orphanage; after our introduction I remember how my pity for her was enhanced by the sadness of her countenance and the singular plainness of her aspect. Her figure, lean and angular then, was far from being handsome, and her sallow face and irregular features, lit only by two great cavernous dark eyes, that gleamed out from under their heavy brows in a way that startled one, and set the fancy busy with thoughts of what sort of soul it could be that should so signal itself to the outer world—her face, I say, which could by no stretch of the imagination be called beautiful.

I was sixteen then, an only child, much petted indeed, but beginning already to feel the loneliness which is often the lot of only children. I had been kept much apart from playmates of my own age by my parents, and was therefore of purer mind and less worldly than, if my observations are correct, boys usually are at that age. I was also thoroughly inexperienced. I had always wanted a sister; of late years I had grown to feel quite abused that fate had not granted what it seemed to me was my very reasonable desire. So when it had first been told me that Helen was coming to be an inmate of our home, I had built some very fanciful hopes upon the circumstance. These hopes, I grieve to say, were all dispelled at the sight of this very plain Miss Graves who was ushered into our family circle one cold December evening.

The sister that I had pictured to myself was a beautiful girl with a sunny smile and lovely flowing flaxen ringlets—a girl who could wear white muslin frocks and blue ribbons with perfect grace even in midwinter.

I sighed a little over the failure of my hopes. I think I should even have sulked a little, if the sadness of Miss Helen's countenance had not woken my pity and touched my better nature. I remember trying hard during that evening to engage our new inmate in conversation, but without success. Mamma said it was because she was shy, but I remember fearing it was rather because she was stupid. I was therefore quite surprised, next morning, when I entered the schoolroom, to find her there before me, and engaged in an animated conversation with Mr. Dalnich, our tutor.

"Why," I said, having bidden her good-morning, "you are early. I think it argues well for your industry to find you here in such good season. I fancied you would not commence study till after the holidays."

Miss Helen's face had been very bright, I almost thought it eager, when I entered, but her eyes drooped now, and a painful flush mounted to her forehead. Mr. Dalnich kindly covered her embarrassment by replying:

"I find, Master Paul, that Miss Helen has the habit of promptness in study. She already so nearly rivals you in her Latin, that I warn you you will have to take hold in earnest if you expect to distance her. In mathematics I would not advise you to measure yourself with her at all; and as for latitude and longitude, I know not who has taught it to her, but she knows as much about the world as if she had made it!"

Here was a sister indeed!

"Why," I said, looking at Miss Helen, I fear, a little coldly, "you must indeed have been industrious to have made such proficiency at your age."

Helen found courage to reply, in a quavering voice:

"Mr. Dalnich is flattering me. There is no danger that you will find me a rival."

"But I know Mr. Dalnich better than you," I said,

"and I know he never flatters his pupils—at least his young gentlemen pupils. I own I have yet to learn his habits where young ladies are concerned."

Mr. Dalnich smiled, and to soothe my amour-propre said:

"I have taken the liberty, Master Paul, to show your portfolio of drawings to Miss Helen, and she admired them vastly."

"Oh, they are charming!" said Helen. "I never admired anything so much. And I have never taken drawing lessons, and, what is more, have no gift in that direction."

"Oh," I said, more flattered than you could believe by this simple speech, "these drawings are nothing. You must come into my studio some day and see my crayons. I am commencing likewise to sketch in oil. I hope you will be interested in that also."

"There is no doubt of it," said Helen, eagerly. "Mamma often wished that I could know more of pictures. I hope I shall please you well enough, so that you will be willing to teach me."

"Papa and Mr. Dalnich know many artists," I replied, "and no doubt you and mamma will some time make the tour of the studios and art galleries."

"Yes, I know," said Helen, with unsophisticated eagerness. "Mamma has told me about them, but she said they were nothing beside the great galleries which she had seen abroad, at the Louvre and the Vatican."

Mr. Dalnich smiled at her rapid speech, and even I began to feel myself warming a little towards such enthusiasm for my favourite pursuit.

But at dinner the glow was all gone, and she was the same prim, shy, dull girl that she had been the evening before. I soon found, however, that Mr. Dalnich had been right. Miss Helen was quite inclined to lead me a race in the schoolroom. Indeed, after a little, I grew to console myself for her easy victories by thinking that art was after all to be my vocation, and here I had the field quite to myself. Helen would never be an artist, but still in every department of art, except that of actual accomplishment, her industry was wonderful.

The next year, however, I entered college somewhat in advance, and at twenty I went abroad to study. I spent three years at Rome and Florence, made the tour of Europe, sketched a little under Oriental skies, and came home just turned of twenty-four, in my own estimation, at least, a promising artist and a travelled man of the world.

During my college years Helen and I had kept up a semi-occasional, semi-fraternal kind of correspondence. I think my letters had been at times touched with the sentiment common to boys in their later teens, but hers had always been simple and frank epistles, in which not even boyish self-love could discover the slightest tinge of rose-colour. She was sixteen when I went abroad, and then the letters ceased entirely. Mamma indeed used to hint to me of the eagerness with which Helen devoured the endless pages of description which I sent home for her delectation; and now and then there were enthusiastic paragraphs concerning Helen's wonderful improvement both in mind and appearance—her manners had always been unexceptionable. But I was absorbed in Titian and Paul Veronese, Madonnas and Saint Cecilia's, with, if the truth must be told, now and then a stray glance for pretty German peasant girls or Italian contadine, and was troubled with few thoughts of what might befall my shy foster-sister at home.

The train reached the terminus at ten o'clock in the morning. I remember well my father's hearty greeting, the eager look of his eyes into mine, the cordial pressure of his hand, and I am not sure but a treacherous moisture about his eyes as well; and I can never forget how thoroughly glad I was to be at home once more.

"Let us hurry away from here," said papa. "Get your luggage as soon as may be, and then we must hasten to your mamma. She is waiting in the carriage. I could not keep her at home."

"I am glad you did not, I am sure. Dear mamma! how is she looking?"

"Handsomer than ever," said my father. "You cannot imagine how gray hair becomes her. And Helen is just the dearest, loveliest girl. I am impatient for you to see her. I'll promise you she will eclipse anything you've seen in all Europe."

I laughed a little, but cherished a private doubt. In another moment I was at the carriage door, and mamma had her arms around my neck, and was sobbing on my shoulder. All the way home she could do nothing but admire me and rejoice in me, after the manner of mothers. But just as we were leaving the carriage she said:

"I wonder where Helen is. I thought she would certainly be at the door to welcome us."

"Indeed," I said playfully, "I am jealous of Miss



Helen. I think she has been improving her opportunities during my absence."

And then mamma broke out into the most rapturous description. It was a clear case of domestic infatuation, I thought, and still I was glad that during my absence my dear parents had been so comforted.

"Where's Miss Helen?" said mamma, rather impatiently, to the servant who met us at the door.

"She has gone to Miss Martineau's to spend the day," was the reply. "She bade me tell you, ma'am, that she should be home for dinner."

"Perverse creature!" said mamma, a little vexed; "and she knew how anxious I was to hear what you thought of her."

At that moment light broke into my mind.

"I think it was very delicate and thoughtful of her," I said, "to give us this first day all to ourselves. I am sure, mamma, I am very glad to have no stranger near."

"Oh, but," said mamma, "Helen is no stranger. She is just the dearest child—"

"Stop, now, mamma," I said, "or I shall certainly grow jealous. I thought I was the dearest child."

"Oh, you foolish boy, so of course you are, but—" "See here, mamma, what I have brought you," I interrupted, secretly a little weary of this enthusiasm. It was a case of antique jewellery, which I had bought in Rome.

"It is elegant," said mamma, "and in such perfect taste. And what have you for—the other members of the family?"

"Oh, there are dozens of things for you and papa," I said. "I've been laying up treasures for you these whole four years; and, let me see, I think I bought a fan in Paris for Miss Helen."

Mamma looked grieved.

"Paul," she said, a little soberly, "these ornaments are too youthful for me; let me beg you to present them to Helen."

"No, mamma," I said. "It is not so bad as that. Papa has been so generous to me that I need not despoil you of your jewellery because of my forgetfulness of Miss Helen's claims. See, here is an antique Egyptian bronze—a thing which would cost a fortune in this country, but which I got for a trifle in a little Italian town. Put that upon her mantel with my card, while she is gone; it will save the trouble of a formal presentation."

Mamma was delighted. It was done as I had suggested, and the fan was laid upon her dressing bureau. And then there was a season of peace concerning Miss Helen.

Toward evening I strolled out with papa. Meeting some old artist friends I went upon a cruise with them, and it was so late before I reached home that I had barely time for a hasty toilet before the dinner-bell rang. I went rapidly down the staircase and entered the drawing-room with an apology upon my lips.

I am and always have been a tolerably self-possessed young man, but you can scarcely imagine my surprise as I entered the drawing-room. My parents, whom I had expected to find, were not there, but in place of them were two young ladies, both surpassingly handsome, and neither of whom, it seemed to me, could I ever have set eyes upon before.

The one who advanced to me was a tall, superb creature, with a figure lithe and flexible as a lily stem, yet admirably rounded. Her features were not regular, but her eyes, hair, complexion, teeth were all magnificent. She might have—in fact for an instant I fancied she had—stepped out of one of Murillo's pictures. She wore a simple but elegant costume of black silk; there was a rose at her throat, a golden arrow in her hair, and on one finger gleamed a handsome solitaire diamond. Her manner as she advanced toward me was queenly and her greeting most delicate and dignified.

"It gives me infinite pleasure to welcome you home, Mr. Vernon," she said. "Let me present my friend, Miss Martineau."

"It is Miss Graves," I said, after I had greeted Miss Martineau with so much of dignity as I could muster. "Pardon, but at first I could not believe my own eyes. I was not aware that even Time, who is a wondrous magician, as we all know, could bring about such transformations. You have grown beautiful, Helen."

Her colour rose a trifle, but her self-possession was perfect. Miss Martineau spoke.

"Ah, Mr. Vernon," she said, "you are not the first who has made that discovery. Helen has scores of worshippers."

"That is not difficult at all to imagine," I replied; "indeed it is of the nature of a self-evident truth."

But you must see Miss Martineau.

She was a delicate, fairylike creature—a pure blonde, her hair just spun gold, neither a trace of silver nor of auburn in it. It was crimped all about

her brows in the fashion of the day, and piled in massy coils upon the top of her head. Her face was like nothing else in the world but a crumpled rosebud, her mouth a Cupid's bow, and her eyes the quivers where he kept his most precious arrows. She defied description; you took a sense of her through the pores rather than by way of the brain. Helen transfixed one with her Juno-like glances, but Miss Martineau—"Nettie," her friend called her—just bewitched and enchanted one.

Mamma came in that instant, and was not long in discovering the trouble I was in, and, with the usual fatuity of elderly ladies, she made sure that it was Helen who had been my undoing, and her whole motherly soul glowed with delight.

At dinner I was placed between the two young ladies. Helen's brilliant society manner soon exhaled itself, however, and she relapsed into something which reminded me of her first dinner in our house. There was a trace of the same shy reserve, I thought, though not her worst enemy could call her dull, and her face had even a more noble and dignified beauty in repose than when lighted.

But Nettie Martineau surpassed all women whom I had ever seen. She was, at that moment, the one woman of all the world for me. She seemed to me just an exquisite French marquise of the ancient régime stepped down from her canvas in the Louvre, with all the mingling of voluptuous charm and the finer fascination of esprit about her which characterized the court of the Grand Monarch. Sensuous grace, historic charm and cultured æsthetic training, all combined to make her irresistible.

After dinner came music. Helen played well, and had a fine contralto voice, but Miss Martineau's clear, bird-like soprano was melody itself. I fancied that till that moment I had never found a voice exactly suited to my own deep baritone, and dust followed duet, Helen kindly playing the accompaniments.

It was ten o'clock when Helen rose from the piano. I fancy that she looked a little weary, but she denied the imputation, and I made ready to see Miss Martineau home.

"Since you and Miss Graves are such firm friends," I said, as we were parting, "I shall hope to be admitted also to the charmed circle of your admirers. We shall meet often, I trust."

"Oh, no doubt of it," she said; "at least for the present," she added, smiling archly. "By-and-bye, when society engrosses you, as it will be certain to do, you will have other employment besides dancing attendance upon your foster-sister's little friend."

"We shall see whether or not you are a prophet," I said. "I shall beg your pardon for indulging a doubt on that subject."

So, with a merry "good-night," we parted.

For the next week Miss Martineau filled all my thoughts. I had intended to give myself some weeks of leisure before fitting up my studio and commencing work, but I became suddenly possessed with the idea of painting Miss Martineau's portrait, and made haste to get a room in order for the purpose.

She was delighted with the idea, as all pretty women are with the opportunity of contemplating their own charms for the space of some weeks, and all under due and proper licence and authority; but, woman-like, she insisted that Helen should be present at all the sittings.

My poor Helen! I can see now what a trial it was which she was forced to undergo, but at that time I had only eyes and ears for Miss Martineau. Helen, with her magnificent beauty and her noble, ardent soul, was for me then a sealed volume. Having eyes, I saw not; having ears, I heard not.

The studio which I had improvised was now the scene of my happiest hours. It was fitted up, I flattered myself, with more of taste and elegance than is usually found in the dens of even the dilettanti. The designing of my furniture and the disposition of my foreign treasures cost me many a wakeful midnight hour; but the lovely figure of Miss Martineau flitting through and brightening every transformation of the scene, more than repaid me for my labour and anxiety.

The angel of my dreams was to be painted in the costume of a Watteau shepherdess. I fancied that I should find the greatest triumph of my art in the mingling of the innocent archness of the poetical maiden with the elegant comprehension of the woman of the world. I gave weeks of study to the elaboration of that idea, and experienced the greatest surprise, when I had succeeded in transferring the result to the canvas, that it did not in the least resemble Miss Martineau. I remember saying to her, as she strove to console me, that after all it was no marvel that an artist who was merely human should fail in the attempt to put an angel upon canvas. She was delighted with the compliment.

My insane dream prolonged itself for weeks, to the extreme vexation of my parents. Still Miss Marti-

neau was eligible, and if I would not listen to reason and accept the wife of their choice, they were evidently capable of making the best of what they still considered a bad bargain, and crowning my folly with their blessing.

And Helen? Really I do not care to retrace that period, and imagine what must have been Helen's mental estimate of me at that time. I shall therefore hasten to the event which proved the crisis of my fate.

I have said Miss Martineau had insisted, from the first, that Helen should accompany her in her visits to my studio, but after my first lamentable failure she must have seen that Helen was a trifle bored by this constant reiteration of Miss Martineau's charms and my own adoration of them. It had been decided that in the second attempt the character should be changed. Miss Martineau was to represent upon the canvas the Spirit of Poetry. She was to be painted from a side view, her eyes upturned, her lovely golden hair floating down her back, and a harp in her hands. It seemed to me that this was exactly the position to bring out the full charm of her face and figure. She was to be enveloped in white drapery, and a broad blue girdle was to give character and effect to the colouring.

When this had been determined upon Helen drove down with her friend, and having assisted at the posing and arranging of my subject with her usual taste and skill, barely said that she had business which would occupy her for an hour, after which she would return and take Nettie home with her in the carriage. So Miss Martineau and I had that sitting all to ourselves.

I sketched the figure in quite to my liking that morning, and Nettie had reinvested herself in her street costume, and was waiting for Helen, who for some reason was detained longer than she had anticipated, when suddenly visitors were announced. I confess that I was vexed; never were visitors more inopportune, I thought. However, I could not do less than be civil.

It was Bob Montgomery and some of his wild foreign friends, for Bob had lived in all parts of the world, and made himself free of the fastest society wherever he went. They were gentlemen all of them, however, and I found it difficult to account for the swift and painful blush of embarrassment which rose to Miss Martineau's face as she witnessed their entrance. Introductions not being in order, however, I did not think it strange that she should immediately withdraw, and the curious glance which one of the party bent upon her as she left and the significant and half-questioning expression of his face when his eye met mine, I attributed simply to her wonderful beauty and the fact of our tête-à-tête interview.

After her departure I proceeded to do the honours of the studio with such grace as I could command. In less than five minutes the door opened again, however; this time to admit Helen.

"Ah," I said, "you are late. Miss Martineau grew tired of waiting, and has already gone. I may not be home for lunch, so don't let them keep the table waiting."

"Grant me one moment," she said. "I want to see your sketch."

I thought this rather strange, but immediately produced the canvas, which had been set aside with its face to the wall.

"Ah!" said Bob Montgomery, "you paint portraits, do you, Vernon? I was not aware of that."

"Oh," I replied, "this is a mere fancy sketch. I do no real work in that line, but Miss Martineau's face struck me, and I wished to make a study of it."

I spoke the more freely from knowing that Montgomery had some acquaintance with Nettie.

Helen had finished her inspection of the sketch by this time, and left. The gentlemen immediately began to criticize it.

"Ah, it is the young lady who left as we entered," said Costar, the Spaniard, whose gaze had brought the flush to Miss Martineau's face. "She is very beautiful. You are fortunate."

I did not choose to hear Miss Martineau commented upon by this style of man, so I hastily put away the sketch, and directed attention to certain rare paintings which I had brought with me from abroad.

But Costar was not to be so easily diverted from his theme.

"By the way," he said, "was it not a Miss Martineau of whom you were telling us, Montgomery, who kept the gossips' tongues in play last winter in Havana? By George, if this is the girl, she's handsome enough to give rise to a dozen duels."

"Well," said Montgomery, coolly, "your guess is a very good one. It was the fair Nettie herself who kept all Havana aglow with gossip for three months. But I have not cared to interfere with any of her little games here, so I have never mentioned the matter in society."

"And I must beg," I said, a little haughtily, "that you will refrain from comment of that sort in my presence. Miss Martineau is my friend, and it is as a favour to me that she consents to sit for her portrait. I cannot, therefore, in honour listen to any reflections upon her conduct, whatever it may have been."

Nettie might have been a trifle indiscreet, no doubt, and in Spanish society a frank indiscretion is far worse than any number of midnight intrigues. But these were men with whom no one could gain anything by quarrelling, and I thought it wise to refrain from questions.

I went from the studio, however, directly to Miss Martineau's home, determined to assure her that if any difficulty should arise out of such gossip as Bob Montgomery might be inclined to spread, that I should stand by her through it all.

I found her in tears.

"I am in such distress, Mr. Vernon," she said. "Two years ago I spent a winter in Havana for my health. I had the misfortune to meet Mr. Montgomery there, and, you will ask me how, but certainly not by any evil deed, to offend him. I was young and far away from friends. I suppose I did not manage the matter discreetly. At any rate, I know that I made him my enemy, and he is a man capable of taking any revenge. You will not wonder, then, that the sight of him this morning has caused me the deepest pain. Oh, what did he tell you?"

"Miss Martineau," I said, "you wrong me if you suppose that I would allow any unfavourable comment upon your character in my presence, especially from men of the stamp of Mr. Montgomery and his friends. I know nothing, and am content to know nothing, except that I love you, and should deem it only too great an honour and pleasure to vindicate your fair fame, if it were assailed, before all the world, and so perhaps make good my right to ask the priceless gift of your heart and hand."

I had not quite meant to say that, but Miss Martineau's tears and evidently disturbed emotions had hurried me on.

She only sobbed still more, and it was not without much coaxing, and no end of entreaties and vows, that I won a confession that she was not indifferent to my regard, and that, in short, I might venture to hope that she would one day be my wife.

I went home trying to feel in a seventh heaven of delight, yet obliged to confess to some inward perturbations. One does like to feel that the angel of one's dreams is altogether removed from the plane and influence of such men as Bob Montgomery and his clique. I did not mention my engagement that day either to my parents or Helen. Another day would do as well, I thought. I needed time to become acquainted with my own happiness. Moreover, I could but notice a change in Helen's manner towards me, which I could not comprehend. She grew singularly capricious. At one moment kind, almost melting in her manner, the next hard and cold as marble. I was both puzzled and embarrassed.

Three days had elapsed since my engagement, and as yet I had not spoken of it to any one, but Helen I felt sure had suspected it. Possibly Nettie had herself told her, though I hardly thought it. On the third evening, however, we were invited to a party at Mrs. Loutrell's. It had seemed at first that another engagement would prevent my attendance, and I had excused myself to Nettie. Late in the evening, however, I found myself unexpectedly free, and making a hasty toilet, I presented myself in Mrs. Loutrell's magnificent drawing-rooms. It was a very large reception, and though I had no difficulty in finding mamma and Helen, Miss Martineau escaped me utterly. At last, rather reluctantly, I inquired of Helen.

She turned a little pale.

"I cannot say where she may be now," she replied, "but it is not long since I saw her near the door of the conservatory."

That was a useful hint. I had forgotten the conservatory. In another instant I was treading my way through the long aisles of greenery. Presently I heard a voice upon the other side of a stand of plants whose accents were familiar.

"Oh, Robert," she said, "you must be more discreet. Remember what I have given up for your sake, how I have put my whole future in your hands, and be noble, be considerate. In return for all that I have endured for you I only ask silence, discretion. He is madly infatuated with me, and once we are married, all will be well."

I waited to hear no more, but rushing out of the house, took my way quickly home. I slept little that night. A thousand emotions contended in my soul for the mastery. Shame, mortification, wounded self-love, and something too of pity and sympathy for poor Nettie, overwhelmed me. Long before morning I had concluded that I had never loved her; or, if I had, the being to whom my vows had been

plighted was innocent and truthful, not a painted hypocrite. And yet she was very fair, and to the last I always deplored the fate which had turned her aside from the straight paths of rectitude and truthfulness.

The question which pressed upon me with greatest force was, how should I break my discovery to Nettie herself, and free myself from her chains? In my despair one saving thought occurred to me. I would go to Helen. True, she had been changeable of late, but in that moment, when my faith in womanhood had received so severe a shock, a sudden clairvoyance came to me. There were women, and women. The waves and billows of temptation might sweep over and destroy weak natures like Nettie Martineau, but a soul like Helen's would tower above them like a sentinel tower above the breakers. She was faithful, she was true.

To Helen, therefore, I betook myself. I found her in our little sitting-room, busy with some feminine occupation which made her seem more than ever like a household divinity, a woman made to trust.

"Helen," I said, after a brief salutation, "I have come to you for advice. I am in singular trouble, and I need a helping hand. Will you give it me?"

I spoke very humbly. There was nothing of conceit or bombast in my manner. She looked up to me with a tearful face.

"My dear Paul," she said, "I know your trouble, and it is my trouble also, since but for me you might never have known Nettie Martineau. Will you believe that I have been as much deceived in her as you, and that it was only upon that unfortunate morning when I left her in your studio that I became aware of her true character? Since then I have not known a moment's peace."

"But tell me," I said, "how you became acquainted with the secret?"

"It was the most curious chance," she replied. "While I was shopping I grew suddenly faint, and stepped into a restaurant for a cup of coffee. It happened that I chose a seat which was partly behind a screen, and while I waited for my coffee the same group of gentlemen entered whom I afterwards saw in your studio. They seated themselves near me, probably without noticing me, and commenced a very unguarded conversation. I soon discovered that one of their party had been drinking too much, and resolved as soon as I could to leave the neighbourhood; but the room was crowded, and before I could find a vacant place I caught the name of Nettie Martineau, and in the next breath the speaker, who was Montgomery, applied such epithets to her as made me hold my breath with indignation. My first impression was that the whole thing was false, a perfect libel, but in an instant certain corroborating circumstances occurred to me, and it flashed upon me that it was all true. In another instant I thought of you, and it seemed to me that I should faint."

Helen buried her face in her hands and wept so convulsively that I was amazed. I had not believed her capable of so much feeling. Neither could I, at that moment, at all understand why she should so afflict herself. To some expression of that feeling, she replied:

"Oh, you do not know how culpable I feel. Nettie was my friend. I introduced you to her, and if it had not been for me, you would never have been called to suffer this anguish. I had loved and trusted her; I know what it is to feel that trust misplaced, and if I suffer, what, alas! must be your pangs? Oh, Paul, forgive me."

"Dear Helen," I said, "you forget that I am a man, and quite able to bear the pain which has been brought upon me through my own folly. I, too, am sorry for Nettie, but we may both remember that we cannot know all the circumstances which may have surrounded her and conspired to her ruin. I know Montgomery, and I know that he is a man who would hesitate at no villany. Let us be charitable, and withdraw ourselves from her society with as little demonstration as possible."

"Oh, Paul," said Helen, drying her tears and looking at me with all her soul in her eyes, "you are so noble! How can I ever forgive myself for all I have brought upon you?"

I could not quite understand this constant self-accusing, but I said:

"Indeed, dear Helen, there is nothing whatever to forgive. I came to you hoping for comfort and help, and you have given me both. My way is very clear to me now. I shall write Nettie to-day. Has she told you that we are engaged?"

"Oh, yes," said Helen, sadly. "I knew it all. You may forgive me, Paul, but how can I ever forgive myself?"

"As I was saying, I shall write her to-day the simple truth. That I was an unwilling witness of some part of her interview with Montgomery. That I do not know, or even imagine, what may have passed between them formerly, except that it was

something of a nature to make it impossible that she should be my wife. And indeed it may have been only a clandestine intimacy, for which the poor girl ought not to be too severely punished. I shall assure her of my entire discretion in the matter, but insist that all relations between us, except those of simple acquaintance, must cease at once. And, oh, Helen, it will be such a relief when it is all over, and I am free again! I feel as though I had been going through some kind of nightmare."

I carried out my intentions to the letter. That evening Nettie sent for Helen, and the two had a long conference together.

"Paul," said Helen, to me afterwards, "you were right; the poor girl is to be pitied as much as blamed, and though I cannot love her as I used, I shall not wholly withdraw my friendship from her. I believe she means now to live an upright life, and far be it from me to lay one straw in her pathway. She was away from home, an indiscreet young thing, and by the villany of Montgomery she was entrapped into improprieties which might well have ruined her reputation if they had been publicly known. Ah! Paul, think what might have happened to me, if I had not had this protecting home and these loving parents."

"No, Helen," I said, "it could never have happened that you should have placed yourself in a false position toward a man so vile as Montgomery. You can never make me believe that. All the same, I am willing to sympathize with Nettie, and befriend her so far as may be."

From that time Helen and I were dear and intimate friends, though there were still occasions when I felt that there was some mystery between us which I could not penetrate. At last, one golden autumn evening, sitting in her little room, and reading Camoens to her, there came upon me an impulse which I could not resist.

"Helen," I said, "why need there be any longer a veil between us? I love you—will you be my wife?"

To my surprise, she burst into a flood of weeping.

"Oh, Paul," she said, "will you bear with me while I tell you the whole truth? It hurts my pride sorely. I have a deadly fear that it will lose me your friendship, but I cannot help it. I shall never know peace of mind again until I tell you all. Long before you ever thought of me, except as a sister, it seemed to me that you were the only man whom I could ever love. From my childhood up I have never for an instant dreamed of loving any other. I ceased corresponding with you because I feared that I should unwittingly betray my secret. I anticipated your return home with secret rapture. Yet when I saw how determined your parents were that you should be pleased with me and only with me, I said, 'I will not be thrust upon him as an unwelcome bride. He shall not even know that I have ever cared for him; nay, more, I will try him thoroughly before I yield to any persuasions to become his wife. I will not take a husband upon sufferance. I will be loved.' It was for this reason that I absented myself upon the occasion of your arrival; that I brought Nettie Martineau home with me, and planned to throw you in her way as much as I could."

"I confess that I suffered when I saw that you were likely to be attracted by her, but that was nothing to the agony I endured when I found how near I had been to wrecking your happiness. For during our intimacy I had learned that Nettie Martineau was not the woman to make any proud, pure-hearted man happy. When at last I learned the worst, I could not rest day or night. I feared to tell you the truth, and not to tell you were impossible. Fortunately I was spared the humiliation of confessing all to you before your mind was prepared for the shock, and so you were able to forgive me. I saw Nettie and Montgomery go into the conservatory at Mrs. Loutrell's, and purposely sent you there to find them. Providence was kinder to me than I had been to myself or to you, and brought us out of a great peril. Knowing it all, can you still ask me to be your wife?"

I need not tell you my answer. It is sufficient to say that we were then and there betrothed, and that before we slept our parents were made happy by the intelligence that the dream of their old age would be accomplished, and that Helen would become their daughter indeed.

R. H. S.

THE PRINCE IMPERIAL.—Some of the Prince Imperial's neighbours at Chiselhurst have subscribed for a birthday gift. It is a beehive in the form of an inkstand, inlaid with amethysts and surmounted by the monogram "L. N." in rubies and diamonds, the lid forming the Imperial eagle, handsomely chased, and around the base are the different colours in enamel. On the base is engraved, "Presented to the Prince Imperial by the Ladies of Chiselhurst, March 18.



1874," but which they delayed doing until this week in consequence of so many presentations being made on that day and the work taking some time to execute.

### FACETIÆ.

**GREAT CHEMICAL FEAT** (by Sir G. W.).—Getting Gold out of Coffee.—*Punch*.

**BAD LOGIC**.—The Duke of Richmond is afraid to open the museums on Sunday for fear it should lead to the opening of the theatres. This is equivalent to closing the Zoo for fear of the opening of a menagerie and circus.—*Hornet*.

**ABOUT THAT, OR THEREABOUTS**.

*Native*: "Be thy dawg a knowin' un?"  
*Stranger in they parts*: "A reckon he loike knows as much as meen."

*Native*: "Surely, then, he mun a'most know his road whom to his mother!"—*Judy*.

The Somerset colliers have resumed the pick, with the understanding that hereafter their wages will rise and fall with the price of "best Wallaseid," as the tide is governed by the moon. Coals resemble the moon also in being commonly light, and always high.

The following advertisement appears in a Scotch journal:—"Wanted, an experienced nurse to take charge of a young child, between thirty and thirty-five years old, of unexceptionable character and good references. None need apply who cannot produce the best testimonials."

**INNOCENT QUERIES**.—A valued correspondent, "Simple Simon," asks why the Cambridgeshire labourers should emigrate, when they have a Newmarket for their labour at their own door; and further, how it is that the Prussians, with all their pride in Bismarck's Military William, should kick so at his Army Bill?—*Punch*.

**LLIL ROBUR, ET SES TRIPLEX . . . !**

"Why, cook, I declare! here comes the long-lost tortoise Uncle Philip gave us last year! And out of the coal-cellar, of all places in the world!"

"Lor, Miss Grace, is that the tortoise? Why, I've been a-usin' of 'm all through the winter to break the coals with!"—*Punch*.

**AN INSIDE COMPLAINT**.—"What is love, Nanny?" asked a Scotch minister of one of his parishioners, alluding, of course, to the word in its Scriptural sense. "Hoot, fye, sir," answered the blate Nanny, blushing to the e'en-holes, "dinna ask me sic a daft-like question. I'm sure ye ken as weel as me that love's next to cholera. Love is just the worst inside complaint for a lad or a lassie to have."

**MIXED PICKLES**.—Commodore Hewett, of the Ashantee expedition, was recently presented by his sailors with a small black page boy. This youth, about two feet high, had been rigged out in full sailor costume, with a cap adorned in front with letters almost big enough to cover the whole little head. The boy has been strictly drilled to stand up to the full of his diminutive height at "attention," to salute, and on being asked his name to reply, with the greatest gravity and solemnity, "Mixed Pickles, Esq."

**"SMALL BY DEGREES."**

*Suffolk Farmer*: "Two shill'n's a week more? Never! That'll never do!—out of the question!"

*Suffolk Ploughman*: "You're right there, Mas'r Wuzzles, ear't'n sure! 'It'on't dew. Our Sal sally there'll be eight shill'n' and threepence for bread, three and sixpence for rent and coals, and half a crown for club, clothes, botes and shoes for the owd 'oman, five kids, and me. No, that 'on't dew—that, that 'on't b'um by. But it'll be enow to begin with!"—*Punch*.

**ANOTHER DEPUTATION.**

"The next resolution, relating to the sugar duties, was also agreed to, with some verbal alteration proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in respect to plums preserved in sugar."

With reference to the above extract from the proceedings of the House of Commons, we are requested to state that, owing to the pressure of business, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to his extreme regret, was unable to receive a large and influential deputation from the children of England, to remonstrate with him for not extending the general remission of the sugar duties to sugar-plums.—*Punch*.

**BRITANNIA'S CHICKS IN A BAD WAY.**

(A Fancy Sketch—at least *Punch* hopes so—after W. Hunt.)

**Air—"Ten Little Niggers"**

Ten British ironclads, above, and of, the line,  
One eat her own copper off, then there were nine!

Nine British ironclads, much peppered in debate,  
One struck a shoal—not in the charts—then there were eight!

Eight British ironclads, manœuvring off Devon,  
One burst her boilers, then there were seven.

Seven British ironclads, lined all through with bricks,  
The dry-rot got into one, then there were six.  
Six British ironclads, unsteady to ride or drive,  
One was rammed by all the rest, then there were five.

Five British ironclads, sailing round the Nore,  
One fouled the Ramsgate lightship, then there were four.

Four British ironclads, for harbour use, not sea,  
One grounded on her own beef-bones, then there were three.

Three British ironclads, firing in review,  
One blew her turrets through her keel, then there were two.

Two British ironclads, each with its monster gun  
One burst and blew her ship up, then there was one.

One British ironclad, won't stay, wear, steam,  
nor steer—

If the late bad lot come back again, p'raps she  
will disappear.—*Punch*.

### MY CANARY.

HAVE you a heart, my sweet canary,  
Peeping through your bars so chary,  
Singing all the livelong day,  
Driving dark and gloom away?  
Hopping, perching, sitting, swinging;  
Still you seldom cease your singing,  
Sure your life there must be gay,  
Thus to sing the livelong day.

Know you aught of care and sorrow?  
Have you forethought for the morrow?  
While you fill the air with sweetness,  
Making melody's completeness;  
Think you whether golden skies  
Shall gild the future as it flies,  
Or is the glory of to-day  
Enough to make your life so gay?

Would I could live without forethought,  
And for to-morrow's skies care naught,  
Drink life's elixir to-day.  
While the golden sunbeams play  
So soft o'er hill and vale and stream,  
Making time a glorious dream,  
Life a joy, love a duty,  
And all the world a thing of beauty.

I. O. P. H.

### GEMS.

"I THINK it is the most beautiful and humane thing in the world to mingle gravity with pleasure, that the one may not sink into melancholy and the other rise up into wantonness."

Do not lean upon others. It seldom answers. Energetic men do not care to aid a man who never tries to help himself. It is absurd for any man to call himself unfortunate who has done nothing but depend upon others, when he might have cut out a way to honour and fortune for himself.

Nothing is more amiable than true modesty, and nothing more contemptible than that which is false; the one guards virtue, the other betrays it. True modesty is ashamed to do anything that is repugnant to right reason; false modesty is ashamed to do anything that is opposite to the humour of those with whom the party converses. True modesty avoids everything that is criminal; false modesty everything that is unfashionable.

How calm the mind, how composed the affections, how serene the countenance, how melodious the voice, how sweet the sleep, how contentful the whole life of him who neither devises mischief against others, nor suspects any to be contrived against himself; and, contrariwise, how ungrateful and loathsome it is to abide in a state of enmity, wrath, dissension, having the thoughts distracted with sollicitous care, anxious suspicion and envious regret.

### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**BREAKFAST CAKES**.—Three cups of milk, three eggs, three cups of flour and a little salt. Bake in earthen cups, half filled. A quick oven.

**A NEW SALAD**.—M. D. Guicéneuf has observed in the market gardens in the neighbourhood of Brussels a vegetable which he had never previously seen in cultivation. He describes it as a sort of chicory, which forms a neat little head about five inches long and three inches across, very much like a dwarf cos lettuce. It is very extensively used by the people

of Brussels during the winter and spring months, the blanched leaves resembling the barbe de capucine in flavour, while it is as easily grown as the dandelion.

**DANDRUFF**.—Some one ask what will remove and prevent dandruff from coming in a lady's head. A friend of mine says she takes a little borax added to a pint of rain water, and washes her head occasionally with it. I often add a little borax or cooking soda to the rain water when I wash my hair brushes. It cleanses them nicely.—J. M.

**SAGE TEA**.—Take of dried leaves of sage one-half ounce; boiling water, one quart. Infuse for half an hour, and then strain. Sugar and lemon juice may be added in the proportion required by the patient. In the same manner may be made balm and other teas. These infusions form very agreeable and useful drinks in fever, and their diaphoretic powers may be increased by the addition of the sweet spirits of nitre or antimonial wine.

### STATISTICS.

**GREAT BRITAIN** has now 36,000,000 spindles in her mills; the United States, 8,000,000; France, 5,700,000; the German Zollverein, 4,300,000, of which Alsace possesses 1,700,000; Russia, 2,000,000; Switzerland, 1,800,000; Austria, 1,400,000; Spain, 1,400,000; Belgium, 600,000; Italy, 500,000, and over 2,000,000 for other countries.

From the summary of the report for 1873 on mines under lease from the Crown in Nova Scotia, it appears that the 28 collieries at work yielded 1,051,467 tons, of the value of 540,000*l.*; the 33 gold mines yielded 11,852 oz. of gold, of the value of 44,000*l.*; and the three iron mines yielded 3,485 tons of ore, of the value of 21,000*l.*; in addition to these, other minerals of the value of 51,000*l.* were obtained.

**SALT**.—The quantity of salt returned as made in the United Kingdom in the year 1872 is 1,309,497 tons. There were 95,429 tons (of 26 cwt.) of rock salt sent down the river Weaver, and 918,063 tons of white salt, making together 1,013,497 tons. The quantity in Worcestershire was 276,000 tons, and the Belfast Salt Mining Company raised 20,000 tons. More than half the salt made in the United Kingdom is exported, India and the United States taking together in 1872 more than half the exports.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Prince of Wales has fixed the first Tuesday and following day in August for opening the Plymouth New Guildhall.

THE Disraeli curl is the latest novelty in the way of doing their hair adopted by the fair sex in London.

A STURGEON was recently caught in the river Cree, about a quarter of a mile from Newton-Stewart, a right royal fish, indeed. It was 9*ft.* in length, 3*½**ft.* round, and weighed nearly 2 cwt.

ACCORDING to an official report of the Church statistics of Prussia the Protestants have 12,959 churches, the Catholics 997, and the Jews 1,440 places of worship.

HER MAJESTY has purchased an interesting object out of Mr. Gerrard's collection of Ashantee trophies. The purchase consists of an article of native workmanship in the shape of a human skull weighing 48 ounces, and was among the objects taken from the Royal Palace of Coomassie.

A COMPANY is about to be formed to raise the treasures which are still lying in the "Lutine," a ship which went down about 100 years ago in the Zuydersee. It is well known that the wreck of the ship still promises to the value of 12,000,000 gulden (1,000,000*l.*) in ready money, while about 50 years ago about eight millions were brought to light.

**IMPORTANT DISCOVERY**.—A new oyster bed has been found about six miles off Shoreham harbour by the master of an oyster dredger, the "Alma," trading from that port. He has landed in four days 12,000 oysters, the men clearing 9*l.* a day during the time. A second boat secured 10,000. The oysters are about double the size of natives, and are said to be quite equal in flavour to the most choice of that kind.

THE BRUNSWICK JEWELS.—The exhibition of this rich collection is now on view at the Musée Rath, Geneva. Five days only will be given to a public exhibition of the various articles previous to the sale on the 22nd. The disposal of the jewels in the intended public manner has already drawn a large number of strangers, dealers, and others, to the city. The opinion seems to obtain that very fair prices will be gained for the richer gems, and that the total amount resulting from the sale will not be much less than M. Rossel's estimate.

## CONTENTS.

Page	Page
LOVE'S DREAM AND REALITY; OR, THE HOUSE OF SECRETS 49	HOW A GREAT DISCOVERY WAS MADE 67
THE DOUBLE BONDAGE 53	HELEN'S STRATAGEM 68
ADRIEN LEROY 56	PACKET 71
A BREAKFAST IN LIMA 58	MY CANARY 71
A MONSIEUR OF THE DEEP 58	GENS 71
JOSEPHINE BEAUVILLIERS 59	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES 71
THE LITTLE PRINCESSES 61	STATISTICS 71
THE RIBBON MANUFACTURE IN RUSSIA 64	MISCELLANEOUS 71
PIASTRO CARBON FOR FILTERS 64	
THE BLENKARNE INHERITANCE 64	
SCIENCE 67	
A NEW SIGN OF THE TELEGRAPHING BY SOUND 67	
SOUTH AFRICAN DIAMONDS 67	

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**J. P.**—Apply to any music-seller; price about eighteenpence.

**S. H.**—The letter is generally much too indefinite and the most important word is to us illegible.

**WALTER.**—In any case sort of description is necessary. The mere mention of a name is insufficient to ensure attention being given to the letter.

**SHOEHAM.**—We do not undertake to be the medium of sale and exchange of books or other commodities between our subscribers.

**BENJ. M. and T. L.**—The letter does not disclose who is for whom, and the ladies are particular about individuality. They dislike being confounded the one with the other.

**JOHN R.**—The writing is excellent; but Lillian will require a long time to consider before she can trust her happiness to the keeping of one so young and necessarily so inexperienced.

**RATLIN JACK.**—You should remember that the lady has her tastes and opinion in like manner with yourself, and consider that she cannot possibly judge of your suitability from a letter written so hastily that almost every particular about yourself has been omitted.

**S. S. S.**—Your note is by far too laconic. If Violet saw it she would only utter some merry words suggested by the succinct signature. We thought the gallant members of your profession were more thoughtful and more painstaking.

**A PUPIL TEACHER.**—A white tongue is usually considered to be the indication of a weak stomach, a remedy for which is often found in a suitable tonic medicine preceded by an aperient. The nearest chemist to the place of your abode will no doubt supply you with what you require if you tell him your symptoms.

**S. K. L.**—It is said that a cubic foot of chalk will absorb two gallons of water by capillary attraction. 2. Cape Coast Castle and Lagos are about 400 miles distant from each other, Lagos being the more easterly. The British forces were engaged at Lagos some twenty years ago.

**JANET.**—Try a little brimstone and treacle every morning before breakfast; or there is a new German water now much in vogue, called Friedrichshall, which can be obtained of most chemists. As to the hair, a good plan is to have it shampooed now and then at a hair dresser's. You write very nicely. About the advertisement wait a while. In this respect there is yet time enough for you.

**WILFRED BELLA.**—The photographer, we are afraid, has not done you justice. By some mistake he must have used the wrong lens, and dreadful misrepresentations occur in such cases. Even the mounting is inartistic. Why that black, lugubrious and funeral border? The face wears a very determined expression; gallantry forbids us to say more.

**EMMA.**—The legitimation of natural children by the subsequent marriage of their parents is allowed by the law of some of the Continental states and is a part of the new constitution just adopted in Switzerland. Such legitimation is also a part of the law of Scotland, but it is not and never was the law of England. In law made for the above purpose, the children of an incestuous or adulterine intercourse are usually excepted.

**MAY QUEEN.**—Brussels carpets can be cleaned by a weak solution of soda applied with a soft brush and rubbed dry with a clean cloth. Of course the carpet should be first well beaten and swept. Unpleasant breath should lead its possessor to some medical adviser for a cure, it can be palliated by taking each morning ten drops of the concentrated solution of chloride of soda in a wineglassful of pure water.

**C. R. H.**—Folks who seriously wish to be known by a name different from that which appears in the registry of their birth or by which they have been generally known, are accustomed to execute a deed poll stating their intention to change or to add to their ordinary name. This deed is enrolled in the Court of Chancery, and notice of the contents of the deed and its enrolment is advertised in the newspapers.

**ERNEST A. C.**—It is impossible for you to have proper medical advice unless you are actually seen by a physician or a surgeon. Why not go to a hospital if it does not suit you to consult a medical man in the ordinary way? At all events it is not usual for a doctor to prescribe for a person whom he has never seen, because the description of their ailments by unskilled persons is calculated to mislead.

**A. G. B.**—Take're own cosmetics, namely, fresh air, walking exercise, and the bath, are the best. In making purchases at a chemist's it is often better and much more economical to buy that article which professes to help nature than that which undertakes to adorn it. For instance suppose you ask your chemist to concoct for you a nice serviceable pill, which he will be able to do after

he has seen you—for to prescribe in the absence of a patient is sheer quackery, that will do you good and cost you very little compared with the probably inefficient external applications presented to your notice. Your writing is good, though hurried.

**G. G.**—A good cement for the rock-work of aquariums can be made of resin and wax. Take seven parts of resin and one of wax, melt them together and mix them with a small quantity of plaster of Paris. The rock-work or stone should be first put in an oven and made hot enough to melt the cement; then the pieces should be pressed so closely together that as little cement as possible may remain between them. The rule is that the thinner the stratum interposed the firmer the junction will be.

**H. P.**—The best clue you can get is that which can only be furnished by yourself. Bearing in mind that there is an element of fickleness in most human beings, it is impossible that a desire or intention can be carried into effect unless opportunity be offered. Until you give this opportunity in all its necessary details, and if it comes at all it must come from your side, it would be premature to indulge in a lover's sighs, or to expect that a lady would wait for or be constant to one who, notwithstanding he began to woo, had so little devotion in his nature that he became transformed into something very like a will-o'-the-wisp or a myth.

**BERTHA.**—The eyes in the photograph submitted for consideration have a restless, anxious look, the brow is very good, possessing indications of great powers of perception and reflection, but the upper lip and the throat are calculated to alarm an individual who prefers to contemplate the gentle side of human nature. The entire frame is strong enough to afford play to a persistent temper which seems to bid offenders beware. Yet are the hands delicate and attractive, and who knows how much the cares and disappointments of life have had to do with the expression of the face, which a while ago had many charms, for aught we know.

## TO PLACE.

Little friend, the flowers you gave me  
Still have their place within my vase.  
And when I gaze upon their beauty,  
They but reflect your lovely face.

But, ah! they soon will lose their beauty—  
Their loveliness will soon decay;  
But though withered they'll be dear to me,  
And I shall ne'er cast them away.

The flowers that bloom around us here,  
Ere long with wither and decay;  
And I fear your friendship, now so dear,  
Will, like them, pass from me away.

But though your friendship, like the flowers,  
May fade, and I'll forgotten be,  
I shall ne'er forget the pleasant hours  
That I have spent, kind friend, with thee.

L. V. T.

**CHRISTY.**—1. The associations connected with the name of "Ruth" are of an ideal description; thus, as far as nomenclature is concerned, we are not so much disposed to say that Ruth is bright and beautiful positively, as that in beholding a Ruth we enjoy a vision of a possible loveliness. A Ruth usually possesses germs of unusual brightness and beauty, to be developed, however, only upon the accession of favourable circumstances. The next name on your list, "Helen," may be Anglicized by the words "As bright as the sun." She is often as warm and sometimes as uncertain as that luminary is in these northern skies. "Isabella" is connected with the reverential emotions and is supposed to mean "a worshipper of God." "Christina," though of a different derivation, belongs to the same category as Isabella and signifies, that is nominally, "a follower of Christ." 2. There can be no reason for dubbing any particular name with the title of "an old maid's name," first, because a name is usually given in infancy when the child's future is concealed from mortal ken; and second, because old maids' characters, for the most part estimable, exhibit as great variety as is generally found in things human. 3. Ellen is derived from a source different from Helen. "Ellen" is a good old English name, applicable to a child likely to become the mother of a large family, because Ellen means "fruitful." It is true indeed that even an Ellen might be crossed in love; then she might yet become fruitful in some other good work. Passing from your superstitious about designations necessarily used to distinguish one individual from another, we proceed to attend to your more material requirements, and in answer to question No. 4, say, that toffee can be made by mixing brown sugar and butter together in the proportion of four parts of the former to one of the latter. Boil the mixture in an earthenware vessel called a pipkin, adding during this process lemon juice or other flavouring matter. Guard against "burning" and adhesion to the dish, upon which, when boiled, you should pour the mixture; in other words, stir well and grease the dish. 5. The basis of a usual wash for sunburn is ox-gall; to a pint of this add an ounce of loaf sugar and the eighth part of an ounce of alum, borax, and camphor. Shake this mixture for a quarter of an hour and then let it be strained. The application should be made in the day time and should always be washed off before retiring to bed for the night. This is one of those lotions that require to be well shaken before use. 6. Hands hardened by work can be ameliorated by the use of glycerine and gloves at night time; it would be too soft to leave off work for such a purpose, which is of course a more certain way of accomplishing the object. 7. A penny soon about "garden work" can be procured at the book-stalls of most of the railway stations. 8. A mole on the right arm is supposed to signify a marked person or a man of mark. Premising that this is one of those instances in which the feminine gender is included under the sign of the masculine, it may be added that whether such a mark indicates a distinguished person or a simply a distinction, would depend upon many other particulars of which you have not put us in possession. Then again "a mole on the left side" (so your question proceeds) obviously directs consideration as to the state of the bearer's heart, farther than this we cannot answer, for we have not fathomed its depths yet. About the mole on the "right cheek," surely that is a sort of danger signal which if it

could speak would say "Take, oh, take those lips away," words which in this case only mean that it is not on this beauty spot that you desire should be imprinted "A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth and love." 9. Your handwriting is plain and distinct, both good qualities, you know. 10. Do we consider you bashful? A little perhaps. Very likely in propounding ten questions viva voce you might feel nervous.

**HARRY C. L. N.** would like to correspond with a lady about twenty-four, amiable, musical and good looking.

**ANNE M.** wishes to correspond with a dark young man, who must be a tradesman, good tempered, kind and steady.

**LOTTIE**, eighteen, tall, dark and slender, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-four, who is tall and fair; a clerk preferred.

**LOUISA**, nineteen, tall, fair, gray eyes and light hair, would like to correspond with a tall, young man about twenty-three, who is steady, and fond of home; a pianoforte maker preferred.

**MILL MAY**, nineteen, tall, dark, considered good looking, fond of music and dancing. Respondent must be tall, dark, not more than twenty-three, good tempered, loving, and fond of home.

**HENRIETTA**, twenty-four, tall, rather dark, would be pleased to correspond with a tall gentleman desirous of meeting with an earnest, true-hearted woman of domestic habits.

**ALMA**, nineteen, fair complexion, Auburn hair, and brown eyes, would like to correspond with a dark young gentleman, who is steady, fond of home, music and dancing; a mechanic preferred.

**T. L. J.**, twenty-five, 5ft. 6in., a tradesman, brown hair, blue eyes, dark complexion, loving, fond of home and children, wishes to correspond with a lady who is domesticated, and has a small income.

**ROSEMARY HARRY**, twenty-two, 5ft. 9in., fair complexion, good looking, curly hair, future prospects very good, fond of music, home and children, wishes to meet with a young lady well educated, and a good musician, possessing a good yearly income.

**EMILY**, nineteen, rather dark complexion, dark-brown eyes, and considered good looking, would like to correspond with a dark young gentleman about twenty-one, who must have good prospects and be fond of home; a tradesman preferred.

**THOR DICK**, twenty-five, a seaman in the Royal Navy, dark, light hair and whiskers, and has just returned from the East Indies, wishes to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. She must be between twenty and twenty-two, good looking, respectable, and domesticated.

**BLUE AND WHITE**, twenty-two, tall, a non-commissioned officer in H.M. service, (Army Service Corps) rather distingue, dark-brown hair, hazel eyes, fresh complexion, of a loving disposition, and well educated, desires to correspond with a young lady of medium height, affectionate, domesticated, of a handsome appearance, accomplished, and must not be over twenty-one, with a view to an engagement.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

**R. J. C.** is responded to by—"Frances G.," tall, fair, and of a loving disposition.

**CLAUDE H.** by—"Mary May."

**PENNERBYN** by—"Patience," twenty, rather dark, good looking, and domesticated.

**FLORA** by—"J. J. M.," twenty-four, tall, dark, and of a loving disposition.

**LOVELY MINA** by—"Sea Sprite," nineteen, tall, handsome, and a seaman in the navy.

**ERNEST C.** by—"Frank," who has brown hair and eyes, is affectionate, a good pianist, and very fond of dancing.

**GIPSY QUEEN** by—"A Mechanic," twenty-seven, 5ft. 9in., of a good moral character, loving disposition, and fond of home; and by—"Lively Fred," twenty-three, a mechanic, in whom she will find all that she wants.

**T. W. S.** by—"E. M.," who thinks she is all that he requires; and by—"Fanny F.," who has a domesticated and loving disposition, and believes she would meet his views.

**C. E.** by—"Lonely Jennie," fair, good looking, loving, fond of home, and thinks she would suit him; and by—"Louise," who is domesticated, loving, and thinks that in other respects she meets his views.

**CHARLES G.** by—"Follie S.," twenty-five, fair complexion, a good housekeeper, and not bad looking; by—"Nellie," twenty-two, a widow, loving, and fond of home; by—"Marian," twenty-six, 5ft. 4in., domesticated, a competent needlewoman, and very respectable; and by—"Nina," twenty-three, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and domesticated.

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